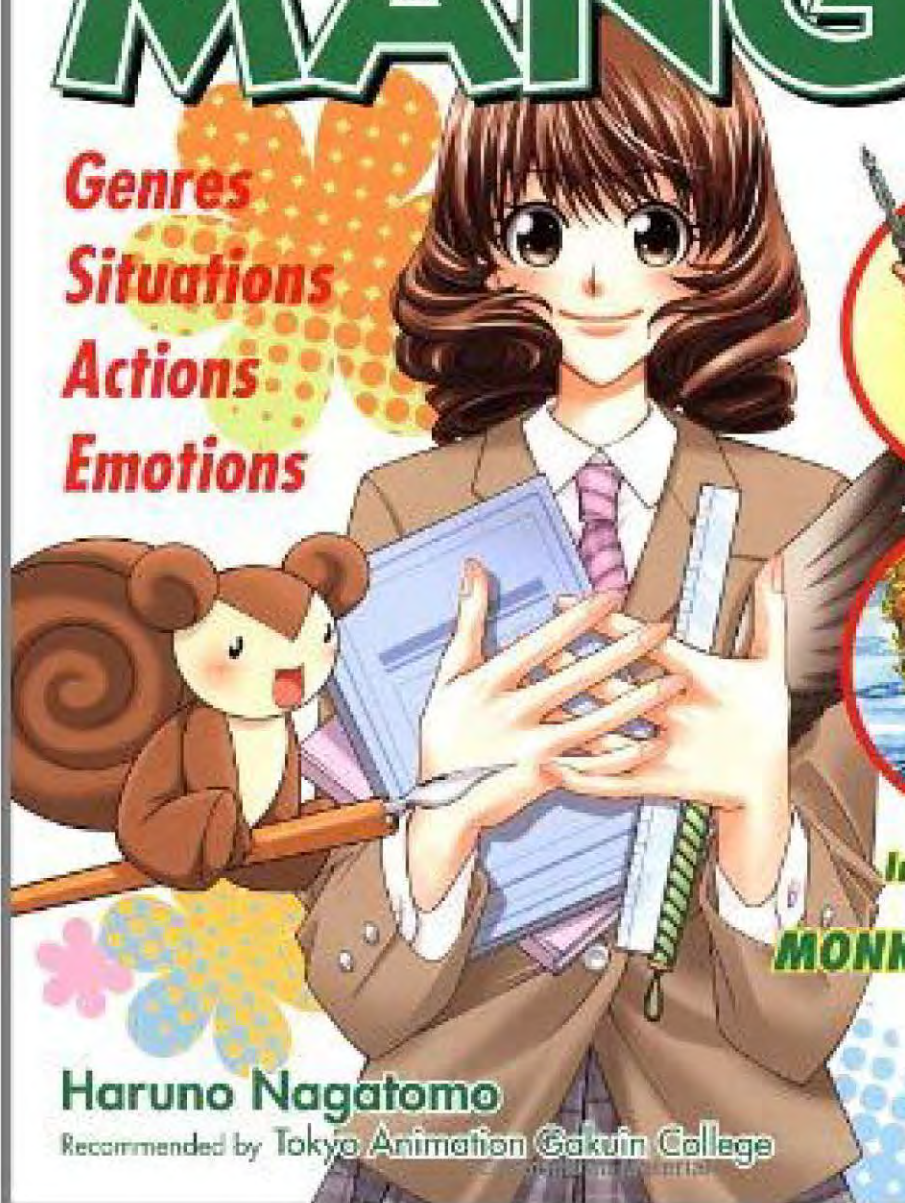


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DRAW YOUR OWN HONING YOUR STYLE MANGA

Genres
Situations
Actions
Emotions



*Interview with
Manga Artist*
MONKEY PUNCH

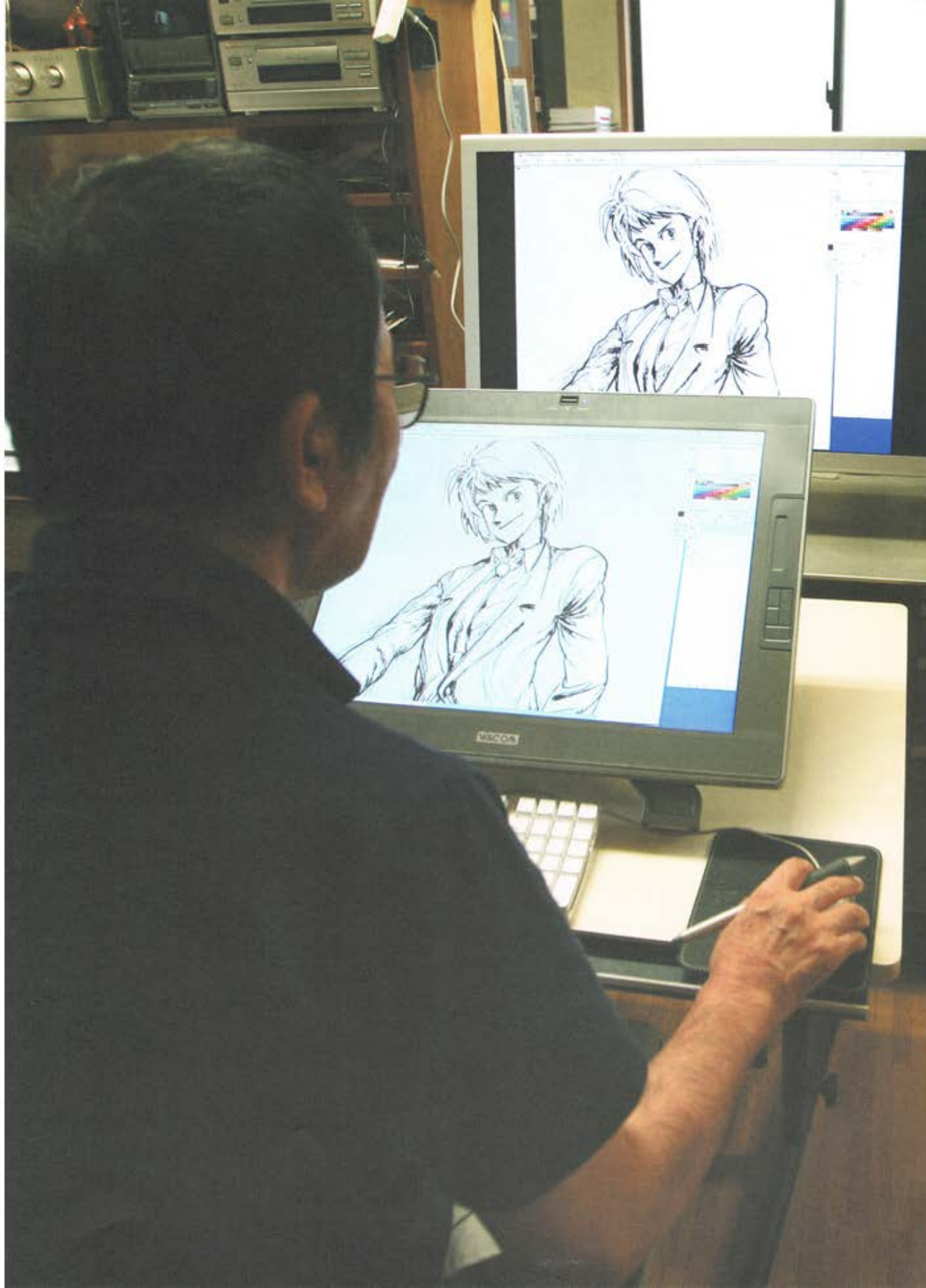
Haruno Nagatomo

Recommended by Tokyo Animation Gakuin College

DRAW YOUR OWN **MANGA**

HONING YOUR STYLE







DRAW YOUR OWN MANGA

HONING YOUR STYLE

Haruno Nagatomo

Translated by Ginny Tapley

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"I'd tell aspiring manga artists not to bother trying to please a lot of people. If just one person likes your work, just try to please that one person."

Monkey Punch (Kazuhiko Katō)

Monkey Punch is the creator of the hugely popular comedy action manga *Lupin Sansei* ("Lupin III"), which has been translated into around a hundred languages worldwide. *Lupin III*'s exuberant characters are certainly behind the success of the delightful TV anime adaptation, which is considered a landmark series in the history of Japanese animation. The animated movies of *Lupin III* are popular the world over, there are plans for a Hollywood live-action movie, and they have also inspired a whole array of stage musicals and novels.

The main character is Lupin III, that master of disguise noted for his red suit who is the grandson of Arsène Lupin, the protagonist of Maurice Leblanc's *Arsène Lupin: Gentleman Thief* series of novels. Lupin III, too, is a gentleman thief who avoids unnecessary violence or murder, but who is ruthless when it comes to destroying unscrupulously rich or cruel enemies. His quick wit somehow magically gets him out of the tightest spots, yet he also occasionally bumbles things hilariously. The rest of his gang includes Fujiko Mine, the charmingly enigmatic woman who regularly betrays him; Daisuke Jigen, the sharpshooter who takes aim from beneath the low brim of his hat; and Goemon Ishikawa, the master swordsman whose sword, Zantetsuken, is capable of cutting through anything from a huge rock to the wing of an airplane. Finally there is Inspector Zenigata, who is always close on the heels of Lupin and his gang as they get up to mischief. Each episode, these five characters get caught up in a thrilling, humorous, and unpredictable new story.

Draw Your Own Manga interviewed Monkey Punch, whose real name is Kazuhiko Katō, in amongst the computers in his studio. He is also a well-known pioneer in the use of computer graphics in manga, a field that he is still actively researching. In addition to his current work on a manga series of the *Arabian Nights*, he is a professor at Otemae University where he teaches students how to draw manga, and president of the Digital Manga Association.



Many young girls and boys dream of becoming a manga artist, but you succeeded in making that dream come true. How old were you when you began to have that dream yourself?

Most manga artists of my generation—I can't say all, but at least half—worshipped a particular manga artist and through them got hooked. In my case, I was really into Osamu Tezuka. Shōtarō Ishinomori, Fujio Akatsuka, and the late Fujiko F. Fujio were all into his work, too. I get the feeling

that just about any manga artist initially gets into manga through being a fan of one particular artist.

You mean that right from when you were very small you used to buy manga and copy them yourself?

Yes, of course I did! I grew up during WW2, so what I could get hold of at that time were things like *Norakuro* ("Norakuro," the story of a stray dog serving as a soldier), *Bōken Dankichi* ("Dankichi, an Adventurous Boy"), or *Fuku-chan* ("Fuku-chan," a newspaper comic strip for boys). It wasn't until about the end of elementary school or the beginning of junior high that I first came across Osamu Tezuka's work. It was soon after the end of the war.

I was born in Hamanaka, in Hokkaido, and that's where I went to school. It's joined to the mainland by a bridge, but basically it's an isolated mountain island. We didn't have a bookshop, so we didn't get to see many manga. The population at that time was only around seven or eight thousand.

I also used to copy things like those four-frame comic strips in newspapers. Not so much in elementary school, but certainly by junior high I started wanting to contribute too, since I could see from the readers' columns that there were people my own age publishing their drawings. Looking at them, I thought that my work was much better and so I sent some off to the *Mainichi Shinbun*'s section for junior high students, and they published it. That was the first time I ever saw my work in print. I had quite a few more published after that.

Did you already feel strongly at that time that you wanted to be a manga artist in the future?

No, not at all. But all my exercise books and textbooks at the time were covered in manga—it was more like a hobby. Takao Yaguchi said the



same sort of thing—friends used to ask me to draw manga for them and so I would draw them. I never did any homework, I was always drawing manga. Not that I had any manga textbook to follow, I was just copying. Learning by copying other people's work, I suppose you could say.

Did you like art in general?

My old man used to paint in his spare time. There was that influence too, and yes I did like art. If you mean were my grades in art at school good, then I guess I was among the top of the class. But really, if it's a question of whether I prefer humanities or science, then I'd have to say I prefer science. That's probably why I didn't have any problem getting into computers later on. When I was a kid I used to make my own radios and stuff. I first made a crystal set when I was in elementary school, and when I was in high school I made a proper valve radio. It was quite expensive, so I didn't make many. But all the radios at home were ones that I'd made myself, not bought ones. There was a radio station near where I lived, so when I made the crystal radio I got old parts from various people there and it was pretty easy to make, I seem to remember.

That was interesting, and I thought I'd probably go into something to do with electronics in the future. I didn't think I could make a living by drawing manga. But as an electrician, as long as

you had the necessary skills you would never be out of work. That's why after high school I came to Tokyo to study at a technical college. While I was at college I had a part time job drawing manga for a rental library specializing in manga, though.

So I never did work as an assistant to another manga artist. I was really into Osamu Tezuka and of course I would have liked to work as his assistant, but at that time I had no idea how to go about getting a job with him. So I just used to learn on my own by copying other people's work.

Once, when I was drawing manga for the rental library, I took a manuscript into the publisher in Kanda and they told me they needed someone to help out in the editorial department. And so I became part editor of manga for rental libraries, part manga artist, and part college student. I was incredibly busy! In the end I was hardly ever going to college, so I dropped out altogether. But then the rental libraries started going into decline, and the number of specialist rental library publishers also dropped. In the end they all went out of business. I was left with little choice but to take a job at a small commercial trading company. I became a "salaryman," but I was putting out a small independent manga magazine on the side. At that time Kodansha had already started their *Shōnen Magazine*, but I thought my manga was a bit too adult for them so I never did submit any of my work to them. Instead, I got together with about five or six other people who shared my taste for manga aimed at adults—I guess these days you'd say it was for young adults—and we started up our own magazine. That's when I was about twenty-seven.

We put out several issues, but eventually we were forced to give it up. We'd printed two hundred copies of the final issue, and we thought it would be a waste not to do anything with them so we sent them all out to various publishers, anime studios, and airlines. We all put money into buying the stamps. By chance I'd happened to draw the front cover of that issue, although I hadn't drawn



any of the inside pages. It was about six months later, when I'd pretty much forgotten about it, that the publisher Futabasha got in touch to say that they'd seen the magazine and wanted to meet whoever had drawn the cover. I'd given my company details as the contact for the magazine, so I was the one who took the call. When I told them that I'd drawn the cover, they said, "Well, we'd like to meet you as soon as possible. Can you come and see us tomorrow?" So I took the day off work and went to see them. That's when my life as a manga artist really started.

Was that the chief editor who founded *Weekly Manga Action* in 1967?

That's right. Mr. Shimizu. He knew a hell of a lot about the manga of the time, and looking back I learned some really valuable lessons from him. If you're going to draw manga, draw it like this! Manga has a target audience, you know, so there's no use drawing it just for yourself! That sort of thing. By that time there were various books by manga artists on how to draw manga, which discussed drawing techniques and so forth, but what I learned from Mr. Shimizu was a way of seeing manga that went beyond drawing techniques. He used to say that editors had to see manga through the eyes of the readers. I'm still really grateful to him, even now.

The publisher where I'd formerly worked as an editor was in Kanda, where there are a lot of second-hand bookshops. It was there that I chanced upon a store specializing in foreign books that sold American comics. They seemed so fresh to me that I bought one and copied some of the pictures out of it. That's why the drawings I'd done for our independent magazine were really very different from my earlier drawings and much more like my work is now—that is, with quite a lot of influence from European and American comics. Thinking about it now, maybe that's what caught some editor's eye. Anyhow, when I went to Futabasha, they asked



me straight off to draw an eight-page "nonsense manga" for them. That was *Pureibōi nyūmon* ("Playboy School"), my first work to be published in a weekly magazine, and it continued for some months. Then they asked me if I would make a "story manga" based on some well-known work. The style and feel of that manga would be quite different from my earlier one, and so the editorial department decided to give me a pen name. The name they came up with was Monkey Punch.

When I complained about the name to Mr. Shimizu, he said, "Yeah, well... it suits your drawings perfectly." Whaddya mean—why *monkey*?! I was against it right from the start, but he just said, "Anyway, all the editors love it, so I want you to stick with it for about a year." I wasn't at all happy about it, but I was new there so I couldn't really complain. I'd only intended to put up with it for a year, but that was forty years ago now. Even I'd forgotten about that by the time the first year came to an end. Mr. Shimizu always used to call me "Monkey, Monkey!" and so everyone else in editorial started calling me "Monkey-san, Monkey-san!" I hated it, but after a year it came to feel like a nickname, and after that it just stuck.

What kind of image does the name *Monkey Punch* have overseas?

I've got friends overseas, and they all call me "Monkey" too. In fact I still don't like it much, but



there's nothing I can do about it. If everybody called me "Punch" I wouldn't mind. But I'd prefer it if people called me by my real name, Katō. I really don't know why they hit on the name Monkey. I guess it has something to do with my drawings not having any particular national characteristics, or the story not really having any particular national characteristics, or the way my male characters somehow resemble monkeys. Maybe something like that. But nobody ever told me why they hit on that name, so it's still a mystery to me.

Some people use several different pen names for different works.

I used various names when I was drawing manga for the rental libraries publisher. Not far from where I was born and grew up there's a lake called Lake Mashū, so I sometimes used the name Mashū (摩周). Sometimes I used my real name, Katō, written in hiragana instead of kanji. My full name, written in the Japanese order with family name first, is Katō Kazuhiko (加藤一彦), but I used to invert this and write it Kazuhiko Katō in hiragana (かずひこかとう). I never used katakana, though.

Lupin III is now so inextricably linked with the name Monkey Punch that it's not possible to change it, even though I still feel some reluctance about it and would change it if I could. Recently there was a short film festival in Sapporo, and the six judges included several prominent people, like a Hollywood director of a popular TV program, a Hollywood actress, and the promoter of a European short film festival. I was the only Japanese judge on the panel. At the screening session, everyone seemed at a loss as to what to call me. They seemed to find it difficult to call me Monkey or Mr. Monkey, and since they asked I told them that they could call me by my real name, Katō. So it seems that other people also have a problem with it, to begin with at least. By the end of the session, however, everyone was calling me Mr. Monkey. Maybe people feel a bit embarrassed to begin with, but once they get used to the idea it seems to be an easy name to use. Once you've heard it, you don't forget it, I guess. There are both good and bad sides to a pen name like that.

Was there anything in particular that gave you the inspiration for the character Lupin III?

At the time, Mr. Shimizu's concept was for a manga to run in a regular weekly magazine rather than a boys' weekly. But the title hadn't been decided yet, and in fact they didn't decide whether to go ahead with it until the very last moment. There were probably concerns over whether it would make any profit. Once they had received the go-ahead from the company and decided it would run in *Manga Action*, things began to move fast.

That's when Mr. Shimizu told me, a newcomer just six months in the company, that he wanted me to draw up two samples with title page and manga content. When I showed them to him, he just asked me what sort of manga I wanted to draw. At that time I had no idea what kind of manga I wanted to

draw, but I thought that if I didn't give a prompt answer I wouldn't be given the job. What popped into my mind at that time were the *Arsène Lupin* books I'd read in junior high.

At the same time, the image I had was of a James Bond 007 movie that was a big hit at the time. In other words, I wanted to draw a manga along the lines of 007. So although I didn't have any particular proposal in mind, I came out with the idea for *Lupin*. The editorial department's reaction was something along the lines of, "That's too old, Lupin himself probably isn't even around any more." On TV at the time were those popular American programs like *Mission Impossible* and the TV Western *Laramie*. There were all kinds of innovative programs on. So from the editorial department's point of view, they were looking for something like the popular Japanese series *Za gâdoman* ("The Watchman"). I thought *The Watchman* was quite good, but I didn't think it would be any good in manga. And so I insisted that I wanted to do *Lupin*. I even told them I'd been thinking about a *Lupin* manga for some time. In the end, they told me I could do it for three months. After that, if the comments in the readers' column weren't behind it, we'd go back to the editorial team's original idea for *The Watchman*. But I hadn't decided on the character for *Lupin* until just before the deadline.

Mr. Shimizu may have given me the go-ahead to try it, but he didn't seem at all happy with it. It seems the image the editorial department had of *Lupin* was of that old idea of the master thief wearing a monacle and cloak. But my image was more of *Lupin* as 007, wearing a suit, so there was that gap between our respective images of it. I hadn't even got a clear idea of *Lupin*'s face by the time we went to press with the first issue. So I just decided to go with it, thinking that I could always change it later and say that it had just been a disguise, that nobody had ever seen his real face. A pretty convenient character! And that was how *Lupin* got started.

I heard that once when you were on a trip to the States, an American woman asked you for an autographed drawing. When you drew a picture of *Lupin* with Fujiko Mine, she complained that they didn't look very oriental, and that was what prompted you to come up with the character Goemon Ishikawa.

I used to go to the comics convention in San Diego every year. One year we went to a sushi restaurant and my friend told a couple in there, "This guy's a famous manga artist, you know," so they asked me to draw something for them. And so I did. For the first time I realized that there was something not quite Japanese about my manga, and that came as quite a shock. It turned out to be a good insight. If I hadn't had that experience, Goemon wouldn't have been in *Lupin III*.

There are two famous robbers in Japanese history, Nezumi Kozō and Goemon Ishikawa. At that time the movie *Shinobi no mono* ("Band of Assassins") was really popular, with Goemon Ishikawa as the lead role. He was really cool. Nezumi Kozō was a kind of Robin Hood-style thief, so his image was a bit different. Goemon would give the character more freedom since he was skilled in sword and ninja techniques. However, Goemon himself wasn't quite strong enough for me—my image of him was closer to Sōji Okita, captain of the Edo-period Shinsengumi police force who was famed for his swordsmanship. It was that kind of gallant figure that I thought would work best. And so by trial and error Goemon Ishikawa became the character you see today.

Daisuke Jigen and Fujiko Mine are both characters that I started using without having a clear idea of them. They gradually started to take form as I was drawing them. But Inspector Zenigata was clear from the start. If you think of Tom and Jerry, he was definitely Tom. Just like Tom could never catch Jerry, there's no way Zenigata would ever get the better of *Lupin*. That was my image of him.

I got the idea for Fujiko Mine's name from a calendar. While I was wondering what to call her, I happened to have a calendar in front of me of woodblock prints by Katsushika Hokusai, including his famous scenes of Mount Fuji. One caption read "Sacred Mount Fuji" (霊峰不二), only the characters for "Fuji" were not those generally used for the famous mountain (富士), but instead the kanji describing the Buddhist concept of non-duality (不二). This kind of captured my imagination, so I dropped the first kanji meaning "sacred" and kept the others. I then added the character "ko," which is a common suffix for girls' names, and so came up with the name Mine Fujiko (峰不二子), which in English becomes Fujiko Mine. If that Hokusai calendar hadn't been right in front of my eyes at that time, she would certainly have had a different name.

It's rather as if Hokusai was watching over you, isn't it?

It was a decision taken on the spur of the moment. I didn't mull it over at all, the name just happened to be there right in front of my eyes. My manga is like that too. What I always find amazing is how the things that I draw quickly, without much thought, always seem to be the things that readers love, whereas when I've got the time to really develop the story and do the background meticulously, there's never any particular reaction from readers.

Manga is really profound, or maybe magical is a better word. Readers are not just into the ones that are really well thought out. When I'm pressed for time—like, I'm off on an overseas trip tomorrow and just have to get it done as quickly as possible—readers rave about it. Looking at some of those drawings now they are really rough, but those are the ones that the editorial team always told me they'd had a big response to.

The late president of a certain anime production company used to say, "A masterpiece is work

that you've done under pressure for time. Work that you've had plenty of time to complete is not a masterpiece." It really is like that, you know. Even artists long ago were probably under pressure from somebody. According to the film biography of Michelangelo, he always had clients or patrons hurrying him along. It was like, there's no more time, do it today, finish it by such-and-such time—so, getting paint all over himself, he painted for all he was worth. If you don't work like that, I don't think you'll ever produce a great work. Just because you drew something slowly and thoroughly doesn't mean to say it will be a masterpiece. The same holds true for young people today—you're more likely to produce something great when you're under pressure for time.

So do your characters swing into action as you're drawing?

Yes, I guess they do. Sometimes I think of things while I'm drawing that hadn't occurred to me at the start. Well, you can't say that they do so of their own free will, but the characters do go into action while I'm drawing them. Once I've finished drawing I understand, but at first I just have a vague idea and it's only later that it comes to me, and as I carry on drawing, it all comes together in the conclusion—meaning the conclusion as in "introduction, development, denouement, and conclusion." That's the way I've always drawn manga. I've never actually drawn a full feature-length manga, you know. In the case of *Lupin III*, the story each week was complete in itself, so you could always start reading it from the middle of the series. With most series, it's not all that interesting if you miss the beginning and only read the middle, but I wanted to avoid that as much as possible with *Lupin III*. It was quite difficult to make a complete story each week, but I managed it for ten years running. I think I did pretty well with it. But I wouldn't want to have to do the same again now.

When do you best like thinking about the story?

A lot of people say they think well while walking, but that doesn't work for me. Even things that I see around me, at the time I don't think of them as possible subjects for manga at all. I personally have to be sitting quietly at my desk facing a sheet of blank paper. Of course, looking back there have been times when I've been sitting at my desk and noticed something in my surroundings that I've used in my manga. But I can't think of any occasions when something has come to me when I was asleep or in the bathroom. Then again, there have also been times when I've spent the whole day sitting in front of a sheet of blank paper without getting any ideas at all.

I was once asked to create an animation series for one of the three major U.S. networks. Tokyo Movie have an office in Los Angeles where they collaborate with American animators and network staff, and they invited me to join them there. I really learned a lot about creating storylines from them. They didn't even have a theme or anything decided to begin with. They would come up with an idea for an episode, and then things would snowball from there. For example, someone would suddenly come up with the idea of bringing in a pirate ship, and then everybody else would come in with ideas for this and that character on board the ship. Then someone would suggest building a trap hole on deck. It all seemed totally incoherent to me, with everybody coming up with their own ideas—like, so let's give the protagonist a twin! Ultimately it was the job of the scenario writer to bring all these miscellaneous threads together. The scenario writer on that occasion was Chris Columbus, who's famous now. He's the Mr. Big director of the *Harry Potter* movies. He brought everything together into a single plot line covering several weeks.

That series was *Galaxy High*, about a school attended by kids from all over the universe who get

into all sorts of trouble. It ended up being a completely different story to what we discussed at the beginning. I was just listening in as the representative of the Japanese production team, but I really learned a lot from seeing that meeting and what it developed into. Ah, they start with an idea for an episode—so that's how they do it! That sort of thing.

Your manga series are often adapted to anime. Have you ever drawn manga knowing that it might be adapted to anime?

No, not at all. It never occurred to me that my work might be made into anime. On the contrary, my manga has always been aimed at manga fans. I was very conscious of that. There's a certain art to reading manga, and that's something I've always kept in mind. It has never been my style to explain to the reader every little detail of what's going on. My technique is like, it doesn't matter if there's something you don't understand, you can still carry on reading without understanding everything. So I never thought it could lead to an anime version. In the case of animation, to a certain extent you need to create a plot in which everything is conscientiously explained. There are a lot of leaps in my manga. It develops rapidly in leaps and bounds. Some readers complain that they don't understand, but I always tell them it doesn't matter if they don't understand—they should just enjoy the atmosphere of the work.

Your work is a unique blend of story comic, American comics, and manga. Do you think that requires an above-average level of readership?

Yes, that's probably so. I have my own definition of what manga is, and I don't want to change that. A common sequence in manga is to have a frame showing someone throwing a punch, the



next frame showing the person being hit, then that person flat on his back, and so on. In my manga, though, I don't show so much detail and will just have one frame showing someone taking up a fighting pose about to throw a punch, and in the next frame his opponent will already be flat on his back. I require my readers to imagine what happened in between. I deliberately don't fill in that part—that's my style of drawing manga. So there are readers who find that leap between frames too big and can't fill in the gaps with their own imaginations. But for those readers who can imagine it for themselves, well that's part of what makes it so interesting for them. For those who can't fill in the gaps it's like, what's going on? I can't understand! But even so, I feel those places where I make readers use their imagination are really important. I think that's probably what makes my manga unique, what gives readers so much pleasure.

You get a lot of people reading manga on the train in Japan. Sometimes I've sat there watching people to see how fast they read, and I've noticed that even when there's a lot of text they turn the pages quickly, in ten seconds or under. There are some people who read everything thoroughly and turn the pages every thirty seconds or so, but I'd say the average was about ten seconds. I get the feeling that that's about the right tempo for

reading manga, and so I keep that tempo in mind when I'm drawing.

If that's the case, then manga must hold a lot more information than anime in any given time frame, mustn't it?

Yes, absolutely. Animation has to show every step of the story scrupulously. In other words, animation can only be watched at the speed determined by the production team, whereas manga can be read at the reader's own speed. I think that is the main difference between animation and manga. I spent two years at graduate school researching the best way to display manga using digital technology. I researched both anime and manga, and took the best of each into consideration when deciding how to display a manga digitally. For example, a manga displayed on a computer screen is completely different to a printed manga book. That helped me understand how well printed manga books work. It just isn't possible to display it on screen at the same tempo. Is it best to display it frame by frame with each click of the mouse, or is it best to display the entire page at a time, clicking the mouse just to turn the pages? I considered various possibilities, but basically I don't think there's such a need to read manga digitally. A great printed manga book is by far the best.

What I'm working on now is neither anime nor printed manga, but a third way for manga, digital comics—but I'm still at the trial-and-error stage. Recently I've become interested in the concept of adopting elements from anime, printed manga, and video games into the display method. I'm working on different methods, like clicking the mouse to progress through the work so the display can run at the reader's own tempo, or setting it to run through the pictures automatically, or showing whole pages at a time. If that can be worked out, then it will be possible to make digital files of the huge body of manga that has been created up to now so that it doesn't go to waste.

You were quick to adopt computer technology for drawing manga, weren't you? Do you scan hand-drawn works and then do all the finishing touches on the computer?

Yes, that's an easy way to do it. I worked with a team from a company called CELSYS to research software for drawing manga. At the time, what's now called the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry was offering support to new enterprises, so I applied, saying that we were entering the age of computer-drawn manga and I wanted to develop software for it. I had to take an exam, after which we were given a grant from the Ministry and could start work. It's comparatively easy to use, and I use it for drawing my manga. I also teach my students how to use it. Of course, I also teach them how to draw by hand. I teach both, telling them that computers simply offer another method of drawing. As you can see, in my studio now there aren't any pens or paints. We do everything by computer.

Do you use pen-touch computers?

Yes, I use a tablet PC with an LCD display that you can draw directly onto. The computer screen has become my main workplace. You can draw even quite fine lines pretty freely. But even though I talk about computers it's not that I think digitally, I simply use them as another drawing tool. I use them in the same way as I'd use pens, paper, and paints. In the end, it's a person doing the drawing—it's not that the computer does the drawing for me. Ten or so years ago when I started drawing manga using computers, nobody else was doing that yet and the editorial team didn't even have computers. Even if I brought my work in on disk (at that time it was still a floppy), the editorial department wasn't equipped to deal with it since the printing company wouldn't accept electronic data. We had to print out a hard copy and then make a

printing plate for it. Nowadays you can use data, though.

In the past, editors used to come and pick up manuscripts, so it was really inconvenient if you weren't in Tokyo. Now, though, if you've got a notebook or tablet computer you can work anywhere and just send the image by email once it's ready. So there's no real need for you to be in Tokyo any more. You can even discuss everything with the editor by phone without ever needing to meet face-to-face. That happens quite often, and if anything it can sometimes be the easiest way. But there are some manga artists who can't draw without an editor behind them. When the editor isn't there to chivy them on, they jump at the chance and disappear off somewhere. I tended to be late with manuscripts too, but I was never so late that publication had to go ahead with a blank space where my piece should have been.

Do you send your drawings to an assistant to fill in the background?

Yes, I do. Nowadays it isn't so much an assistant as a professional whose style suits the work. It's best to work as fellow professionals. I'm currently working on *Arabian Nights*, but once it's complete everyone in the team will go their own ways. For



the background there are various buildings for which I get someone who's good at that style, but we work together on it. Of course, I do the layout and things like that.

You've got some pet projects in hand, haven't you?

Looking back on my older works, there are some that I think are so clumsy that I don't want to even look at them. I'd love to remake some of these. I'd even change the story a bit, and then redo them using computer graphics.

Some of those works were part of a series when you had to work fast, weren't they? You took on jobs knowing they would be difficult, and stayed up alone all night to finish them on time.

Yeah, I guess. That's why, looking at them now, I see that the storyline isn't really a proper storyline at all, or that the frames are arranged badly and I should have added in another frame to give a sense of movement, and so forth. Reading them again now, I notice so much of that sort of thing. I get the feeling that I'd like to redo them now from my current perspective. I don't know when I'll find time, though.

You've put a lot of effort into popularizing manga abroad, doing things like traveling with Osamu Tezuka and Go Nagai to San Diego. But did you ever imagine that manga would become as popular worldwide as it has done?

No, never. Of course, from my own perspective, and I dare say there are Americans and Europeans who say the same, good artists are really good. When I saw really good drawings, I used to think that Japanese manga wasn't really up to that standard. But the scope for manga in America

and Europe was pretty limited. It seemed more for kids. Americans were only into superheroes or SF or story comics. Yet since then, the range of manga for teenagers and young adults in Japan has really grown. In Japan, there are manga that focus on sports, such as those with a baseball-mad protagonist, or manga all about cooking, for example. But there's nothing like that in America, the range there is really narrow.

Until now, the popularity of Japanese manga worldwide has been due to the power of the baby-boomer generation. I've been going to the Comic Convention in San Diego since it first started, nearly forty years ago now. The first convention was held in a room in someone's apartment. After that, they hired a floor in a hotel, and eventually hired the entire hotel for the event. Then San Diego city council took over sponsorship of the event and it was held in a cultural center. It took quite a long time for it to get to that stage. It came under the wing of the city council in 1980, over twenty years ago now, you know. That was the year that I told Osamu Tezuka about the convention and suggested that we go there together. He replied that it would be a waste for just the two of us to go and that we should invite other manga artists too. And so we called up Go Nagai and a whole load of other artists, and in the end twenty of us went. Osamu Tezuka was given a commendation right away. It was an amazing occasion. We were giving workshops and making drawings on square art boards to sell at auction. We sold all of them and donated the proceeds to the city. And so little by little there was more of a buzz about Japanese manga. For the last ten years, manga publishers Shogakukan, Kodansha, and Shueisha have also held booths at the convention.

In June or July I was invited as a guest to a convention held in Tampa, Florida. It's tiny compared to San Diego, but there were manga workshops and a whole bunch of people interested in manga, so I held a Q&A session and told them about the current state of manga in Japan. In

other words, this convention was only about manga, so it was better.

The manga fair in Angoulême, France, goes back almost as long as San Diego—they say it started just a year later. I really like it because it's all about manga, and the whole town takes part. Taxi drivers are like committee members! That's the sort of people who take part. For example, a shoe shop participates by displaying manga in the shop window as a backdrop to their shoes. They sell their own goods by showcasing manga. I thought that was just so cool!

In America, publishers have always reversed the pages in manga books so they can be read from left to right, like other books in English. In France, though, they publish them in the original Japanese-style format, so you read them from right to left. Recently some American publishers have also started to follow this practice.

Really? Reversing the pages can lead to all kinds of problems and there are places where the pictures don't make any sense, but now that we use computer graphics it's not so difficult to make the necessary adaptations to make it easier for English-speakers to read. In any case, you have to write English from left to right—you can't use vertical writing like in Japanese—so I can't help feeling it's impossible to make the reading experience exactly the same as it is for Japanese readers anyway.

Personally I think it's best to adapt the pages to a format that is more readable for English-speakers. You can go through the frames one-by-one on the computer to sort out any places where problems arise. If some of the frames have to be reversed, well then so be it. It's best to make it a natural reading experience—manga should be easy to read, so I feel it's necessary to adapt it to the format common in whatever country it is

being published. Part of me would like to see it published in a Japanese-style format, but certain things are just impossible, like reading the text vertically. Whether Italian, Spanish, Korean—nearly all foreign languages are written horizontally from left to right, not vertically from right to left as in Japanese. And books are read from left to right, not right to left as they are in Japan.

What would it be like to make a manga magazine in Japan using horizontal writing, reading from left to right? Actually there was one once. It was a magazine that had both formats: half the magazine was read in the usual way—vertically, from right to left—while the other half started at the opposite end and was designed to be read from left to right, with all the text written horizontally. You could read it both ways. Of course, all the manga stories were different, so there was a front cover on both sides of the magazine.

Have you got a message for aspiring manga artists?

I tell my college students that they should first learn to draw neat outlines. In the exam they have to make a sketch, and if their outlines are not neatly drawn I drop their grades. In other words, readers shouldn't even notice the outlines. If they're badly drawn, though, readers' eyes will be drawn to them. If outlines aren't neat, readers will not be able to read smoothly. That's a basic point that I make in my class. After that I also teach things like frame layout, of course. Basically, though, you learn by drawing. That's how you get good.

That last comment sounds very encouraging, but is it true?

Manga, or drawing in general, is something you get good at through practice. I've never worried much about it. Really, I don't think it's a matter of being good or bad at drawing. For example, you can't say paintings by Picasso are bad and

those by Leonardo da Vinci are good, they each have their own individual style. What it boils down to is a question of which you like best, Picasso or Chagall. Nowadays readers are getting more picky, and so naturally there are more people who say they like this or that work best.

Therefore, if just one out of ten people likes your work, that's great. That means out of a hundred people, ten people will like it. So there's no need to try and please ten thousand people with your drawings—you should just aim to please one. There's no point trying to please ten thousand, because it's just not possible. For example, there are people who don't like manga by Monkey Punch as well as people who do. I work hard to please those people who do like my manga. There's not much point in trying to please those who don't like it anyway. It's best to work from that kind of perspective, I think.

So I'd tell aspiring manga artists not to bother trying to please a lot of people. If just one person likes your work, just try to please that one person. There were people who didn't like Osamu Tezuka's work even at the height of his popularity. But one thing I do feel about manga these days is that a lot of works are pretty harsh—the drawings, the story, and the whole atmosphere is harsh. I think there should be more warmth in them.

Being one of the judges for an art festival, I get sent lots of manga books to consider. I look through them very meticulously, but I must say I feel relieved whenever I come across a manga that has warmth—warmth in the drawings, the composition, and the story. That's the sort of work that I will shortlist for the prize. I think the other judges probably feel similarly about it. If I think a work is good, it's likely that the same work will also appeal to the other judges and they'll recommend it too. But that warmth is gradually disappearing in manga by young people today. That's something that really bothers me.

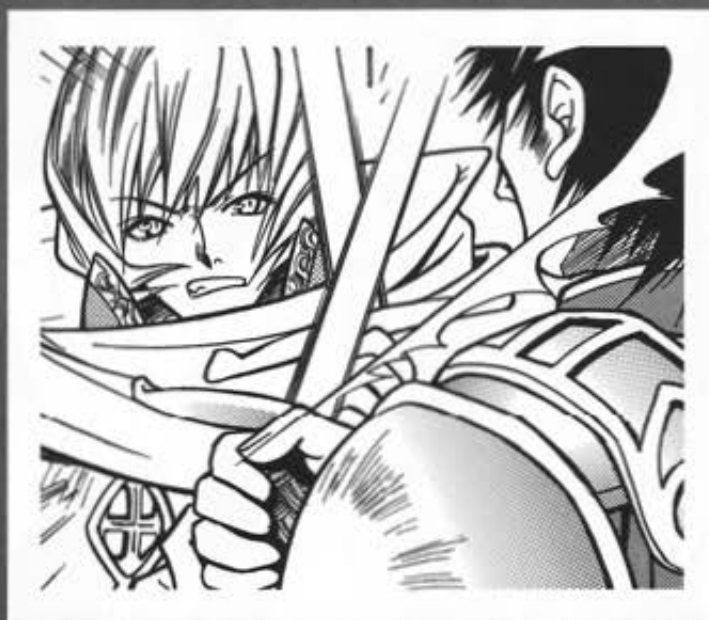
Life has also become harsher in some ways, but I don't see why manga artists should go along with that. I feel manga artists should create works that make their readers feel calmer about the overly harsh world they live in. The news lately has been awful, hasn't it? If kids nowadays don't like something, they set fire to their house or something like that. There never used to be anything like that. Kids themselves are getting harsher, but there's no need for manga to do so too. That's how I feel about it, at least. Maybe it's because I teach manga, but that's how I've come to feel recently. So I'd like to ask aspiring manga artists to give a feeling of warmth to their work.



LESSON 1

THE MAIN GENRES

Essential Features



SCHOOLS AND SHOJO

Manga mainly about school life. They are often about high-school kids and center on club activities and love affairs. In the case of shojo (girls') manga, the protagonist is generally a girl. If the school has a uniform, you must decide the summer and winter uniforms, including sweater, vest, coat, bag, and shoes. Skirt length and the color and width of ribbons are also often set by school regulations. A school uniform is a useful way to visually distinguish between schools.



Decide on the characters around your protagonist, such as his or her friends, rivals, family, and girl/boyfriends. Facial expressions, styles of dress, and mannerisms are affected by their personality and environment.



Think about the characters' accessories and clothes.

If there's a school uniform, remember that the style of bags and shoes are often stipulated by school regulations.

It's fine to design your own style of school uniform, but make sure it looks like a proper uniform!



You can tell a lot about a character by their possessions!

Remember—there are other types of regulation wear at school.



Think about the wear for gym and club activities.

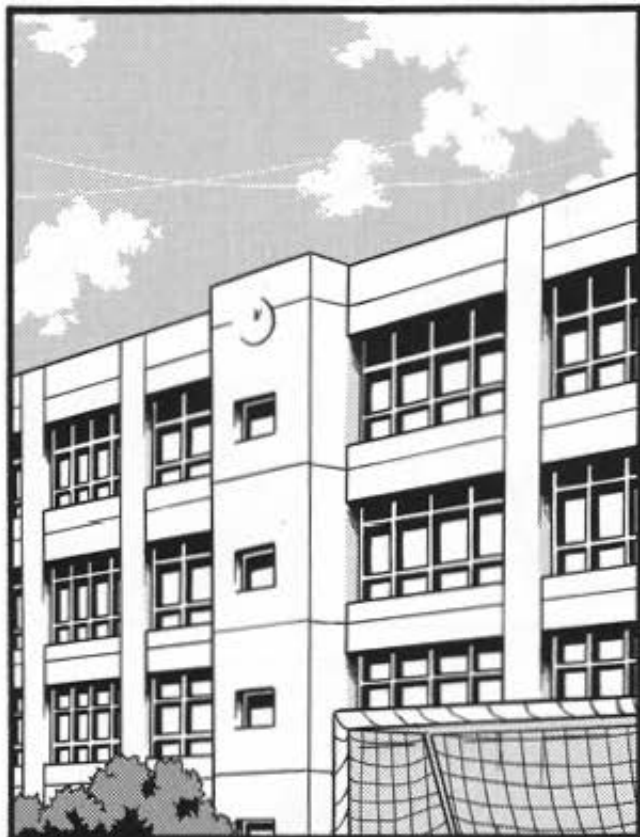


The school

Establish what your protagonist's school looks like. You can use books or photos for reference, or you can base it on the school you went to yourself. You can even use your imagination to come up with a completely new type of school, if you like!

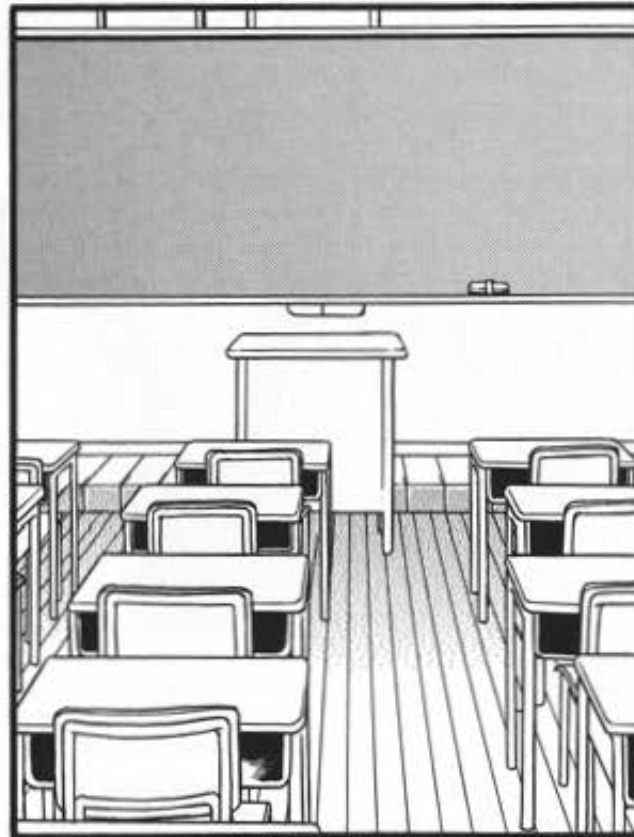
From the outside

This will determine the atmosphere of the school.



The classrooms

Think about where your characters sit in class.

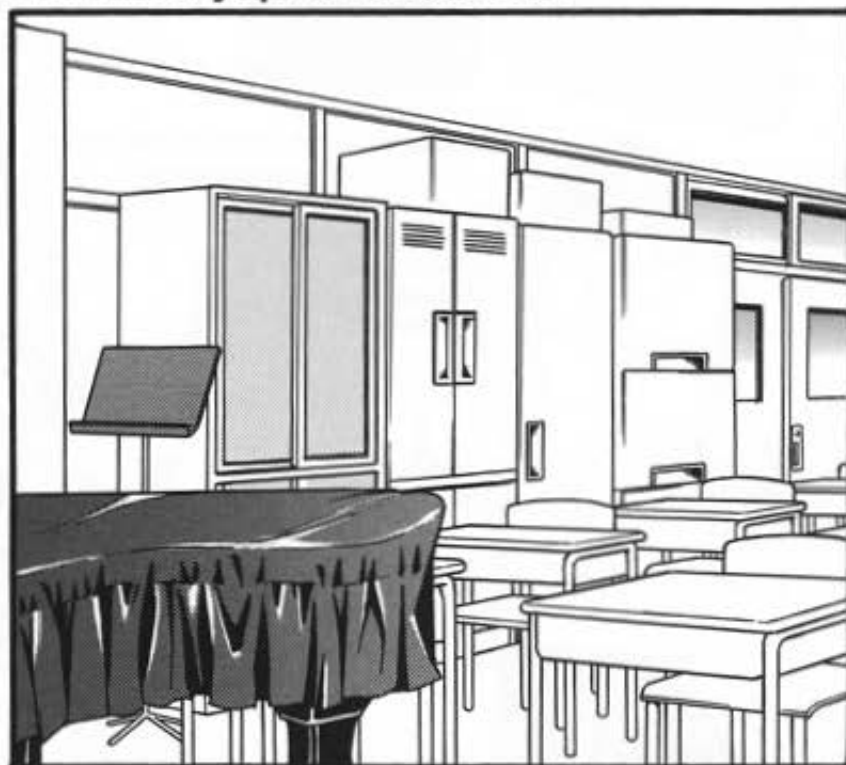


The corridor

Often used for casual scenes.



Are there any special classrooms?



Club locations

What your protagonist does after school is also an important factor. A lively character will most likely join a sports club, while a quieter person may be in a reading club, so make sure your characters are in clubs that suit their personalities.



Other places

What about scenes outside school too, such as your protagonist's home and neighborhood?

The bus stop. How does your protagonist go to school?



Think about the sort of home your protagonist lives in. Some manga are even set in a boarding school. It's important to decide what sort of environment your characters live in.

BISHOJO AND LOLITA

This type of manga is full of cute, sexy girls, and the protagonist is, of course, a girl. Let's have a look at some of the popular types of girls.



This guy's
a bit of a loser,
isn't he!

Lolita girls still retain an air of childhood innocence and have flat chests. Bishojo (literally, beautiful young girls), on the other hand, tend to have large breasts.

They
carry cute
accessories
too!

Guys
are usually
a lot plainer
than the
girls.

The protagonist's bedroom and home

Make sure the design of your protagonist's bedroom matches her personality. Cute girls often have pretty bedrooms with lots of soft toys. Well-behaved girls usually keep their bedrooms clean and tidy, with no unnecessary clutter. Be sure to make the difference show in your drawings.



Special effects for a happy scene

Apply light screen tone in curved lines. This gives a gentler atmosphere than using straight lines. You can use sound effects and speed lines to enhance it, but make sure you don't overdo it!



Play on cute mannerisms!

Try to draw a really cute girl and focus on her dreams and aspirations. Enhance important scenes by drawing out of frame and by using eye-catching screen tone for the background.

BOYS' LOVE

This type of manga is about romance between guys, but mostly girls read it, and it's very similar to shojo manga in content. There are lots of guys that girls find attractive in manga like this!



One difference with shojo manga is the big age difference between the guys who fall in love.



The view of love is basically very similar to shojo manga.

The setting

Think about the environment the couple live in. If they are students, what type of school or college do they go to, and what are their families and friends like? If they go out to work, consider their workplace and where they live. It's fine to develop the story within a particular worldview, but make sure readers can follow it easily.



There will be a lot of scenes at school or work, so think about the various locations. The viewpoint of other characters and what they say about the protagonists are also important factors.



GIRLS' LOVE

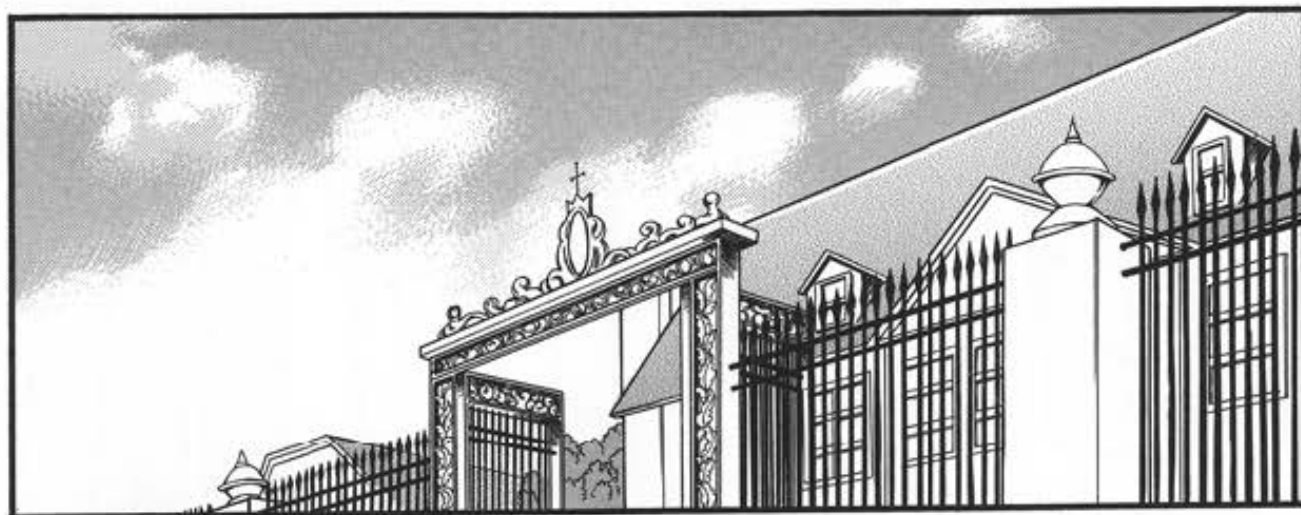
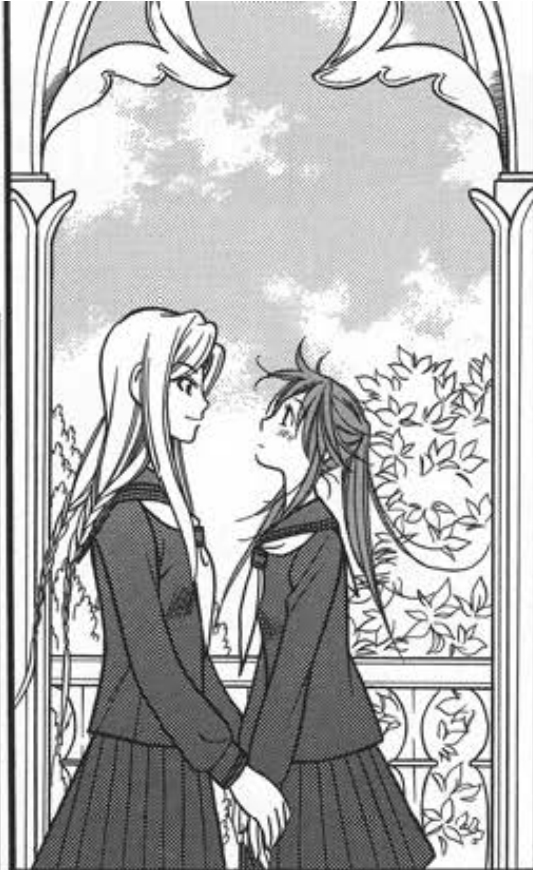
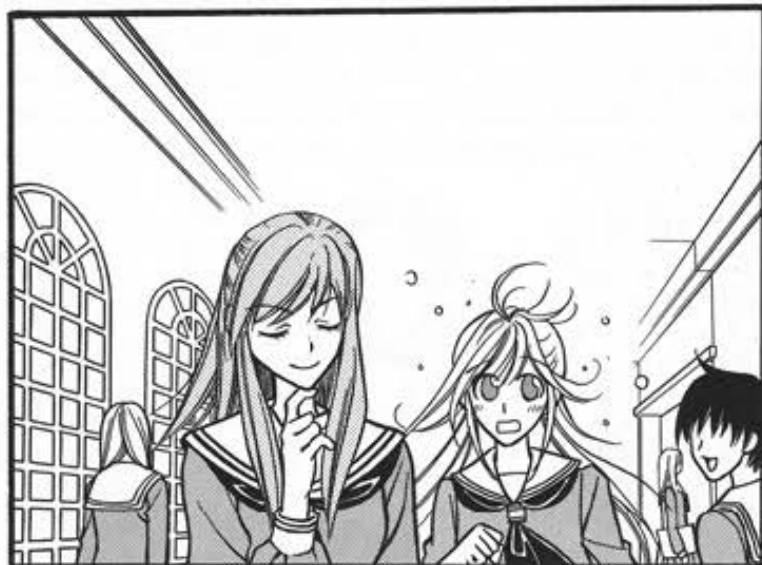
Manga featuring romance between teenage girls. The theme is of the longing or crushes girls commonly feel for another girl in adolescence, and usually features girls up to high school age.



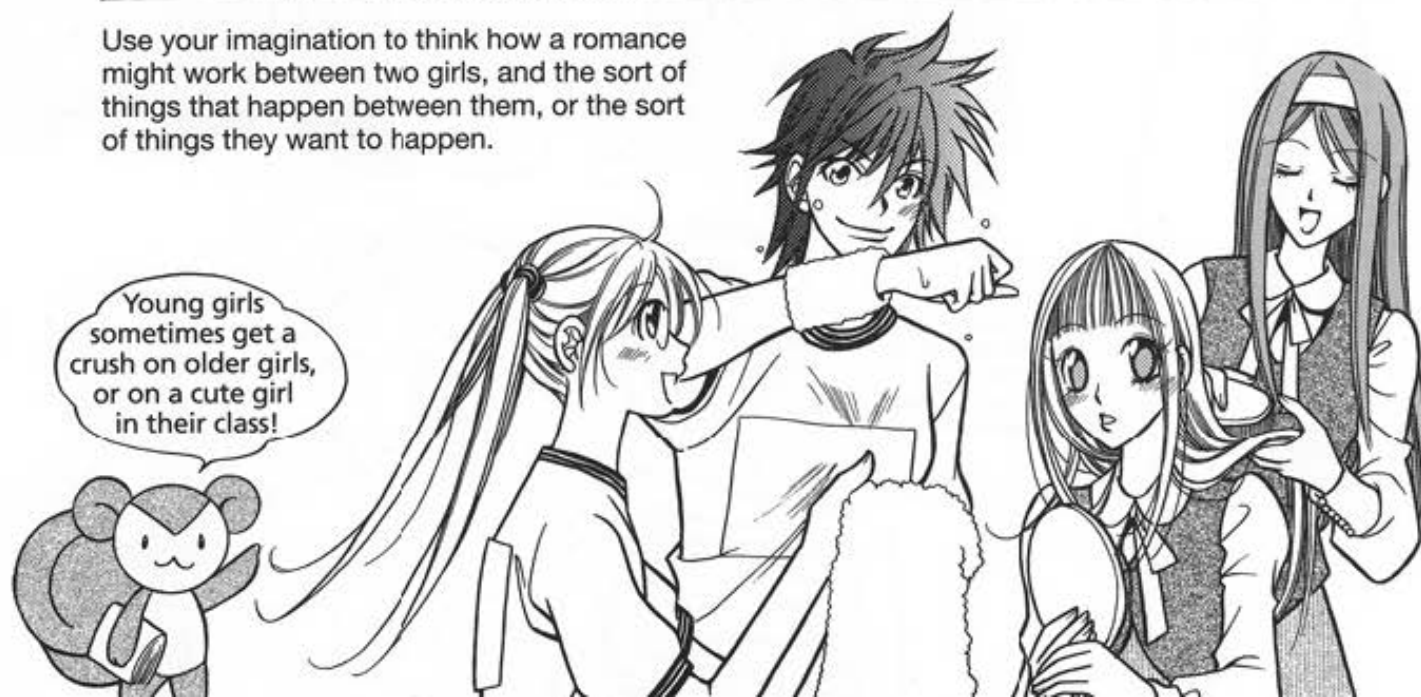
Make the uniform cute, and use accessories like ribbons and glasses for different types of girls. The protagonist is a girl, so keep shading light to create a bright atmosphere.

The school environment

Being all about girls' romance, the esthetic element is strong. All-girls' schools, boarding schools, and religious schools are common.

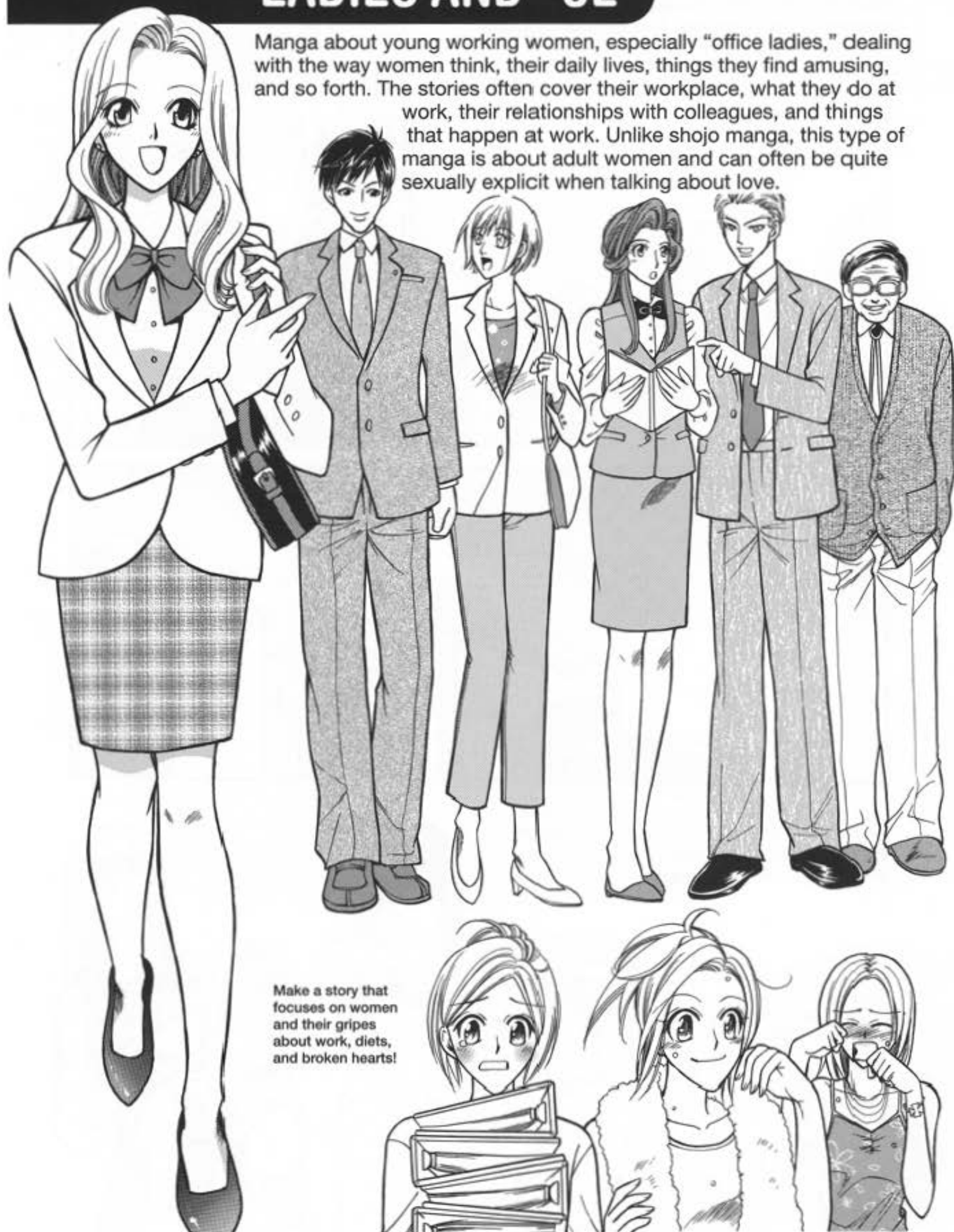


Use your imagination to think how a romance might work between two girls, and the sort of things that happen between them, or the sort of things they want to happen.



LADIES AND "OL"

Manga about young working women, especially "office ladies," dealing with the way women think, their daily lives, things they find amusing, and so forth. The stories often cover their workplace, what they do at work, their relationships with colleagues, and things that happen at work. Unlike shojo manga, this type of manga is about adult women and can often be quite sexually explicit when talking about love.



Make a story that focuses on women and their gripes about work, diets, and broken hearts!

The protagonist's bedroom

The protagonist's bedroom reveals a lot about her lifestyle and personality, so think hard about what sort of bedroom matches your protagonist.



The protagonist's workplace

A school? An office? Or is she a housewife? Decide where your protagonist works! The setting should speak for itself.

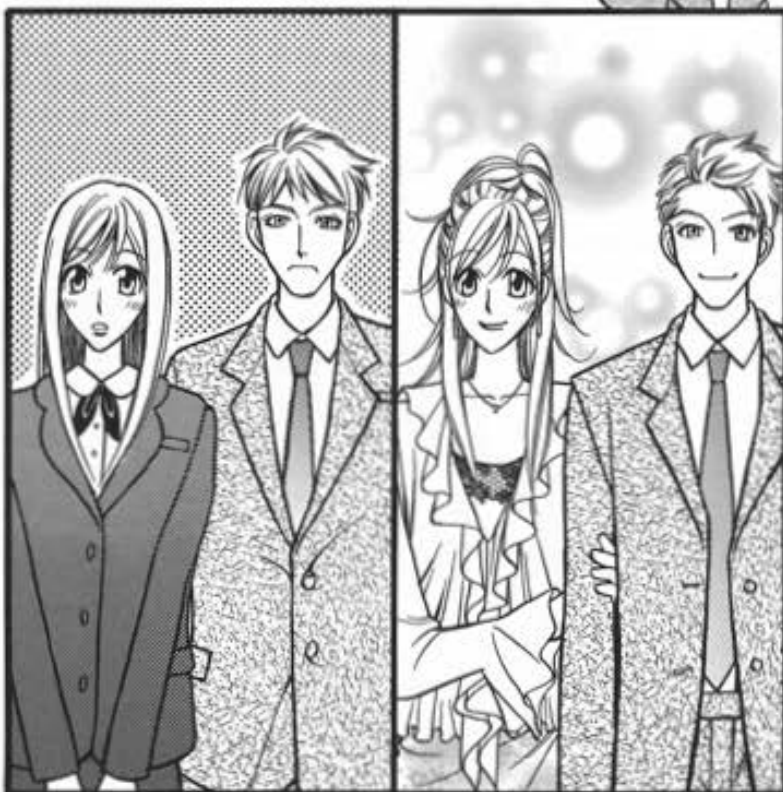


During and after work

A lot of women dress themselves up in the locker room after work for a night on the town. Make sure your protagonist's appearance is different at work and at play.

Guys don't usually bother much though...

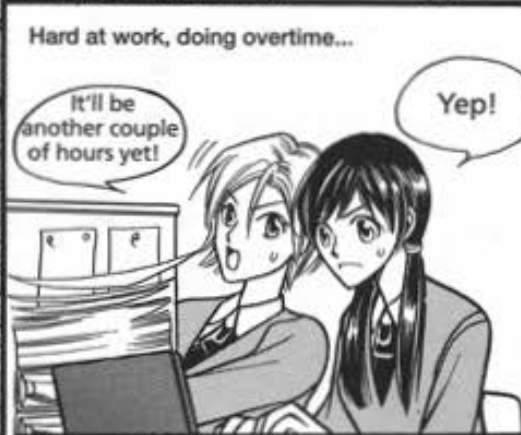
Letting her hair down and having fun...



Hard at work, doing overtime...

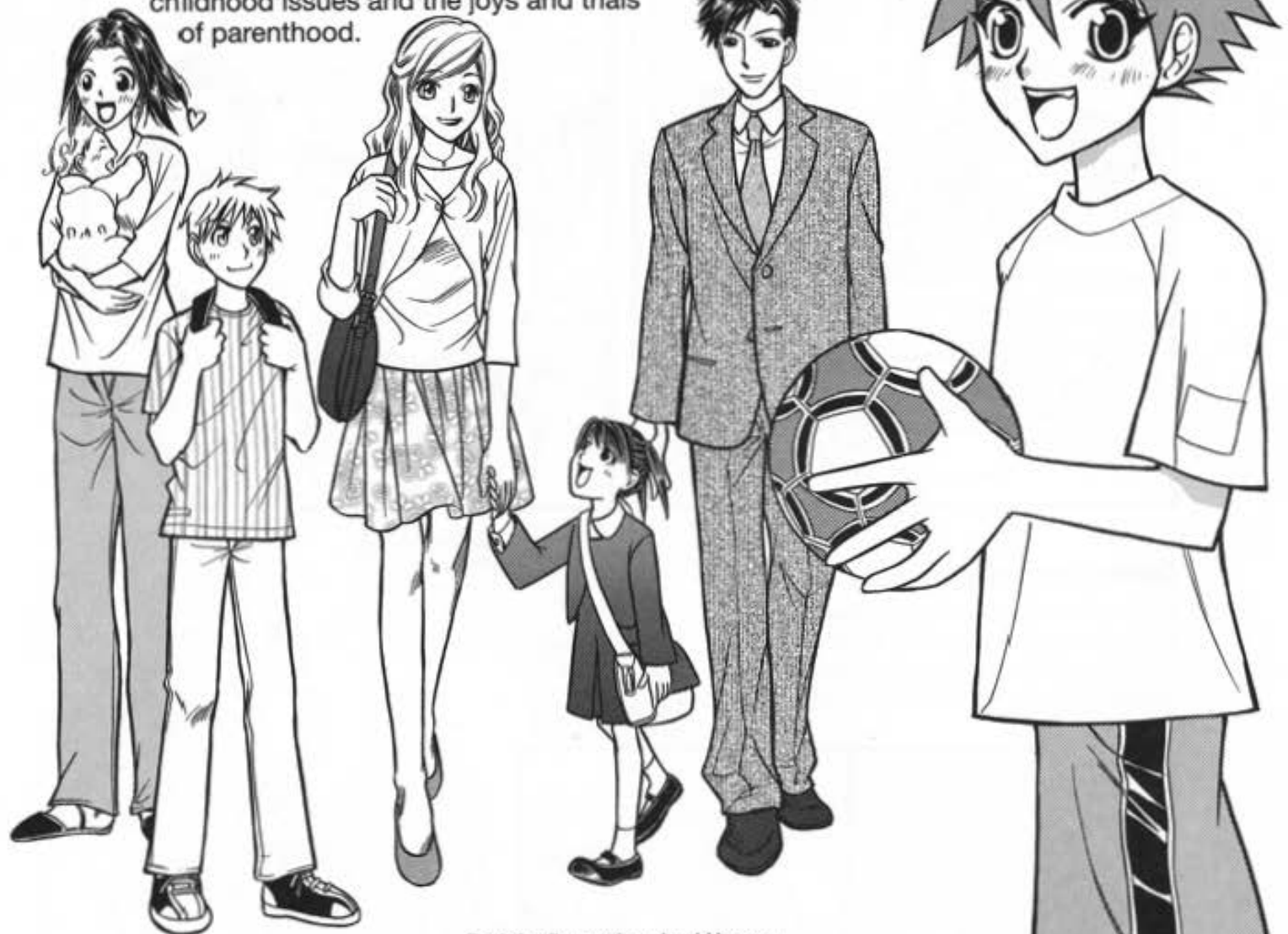
It'll be another couple of hours yet!

Yep!



FAMILY

Manga about small children and their families can be drawn from the perspective of either the kids or their parents. The story revolves around daily life, with an affectionate focus on childhood issues and the joys and trials of parenthood.

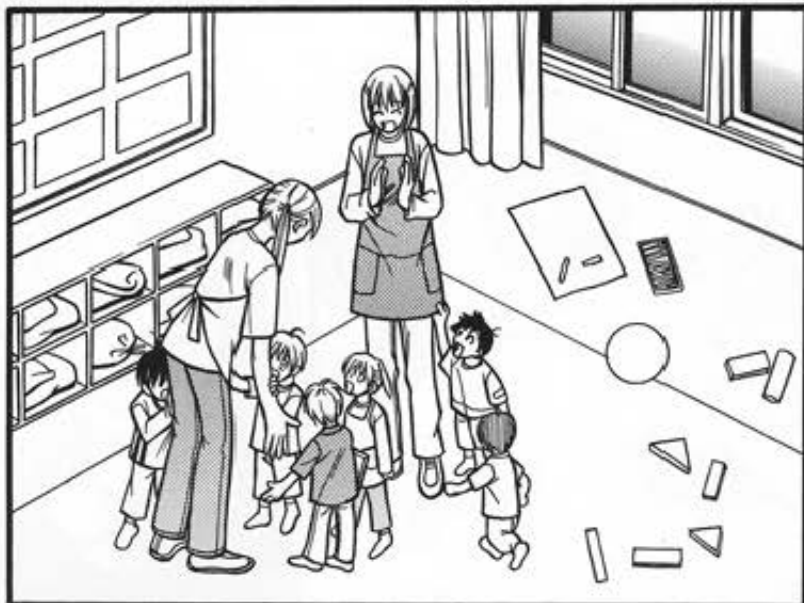


Each family member should have a distinctive personality, such as this brainy little sister, kind-hearted older brother, quick-tempered Mom, and henpecked Dad.



Kindergarten and elementary school

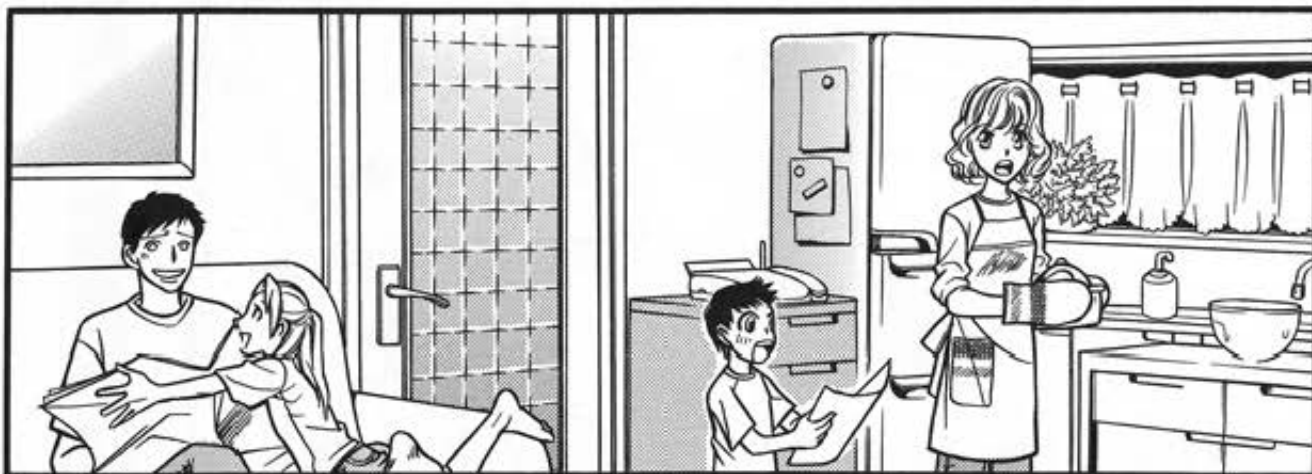
This is where the kids go every day to play with friends, have fights, and explore new things together. Remember that you're seeing it through their eyes, so make it lively!



Bear in mind that children show their emotions freely and their expressions are easy to read. It's even best to exaggerate their expressions slightly.

The family home

What sort of home do they live in? Is it neat or messy? Details like these will show the personality and circumstances of the parents. However scary Mom might be at times, she loves her kids and you should make this clear by keeping the atmosphere warm and light.



PETS AND ANIMALS

Manga about dogs, cats, and other domestic or wild animals can be written from a person's perspective, observing an animal's habits and daily mode of life, or from the perspective of the animal, which often talks and takes part in the action. Popular pets are dogs, cats, hamsters, and parakeets. There are lots of ways to draw them, either making them realistic, exaggerating their features, or giving them human characteristics.

Soft-toy
animals
are good too,
you know!



What is your pet thinking?

Imagine what you'd think if you were an animal. Also, observe animals carefully and imagine what they are thinking.

You looking at me?!

Where your pet lives

Decide the household and environment where the animal lives.



Expressions and mannerisms

Draw things that make your pet happy, things they don't like, and mannerisms you think are cute. Also think about things the pet does that the owner doesn't like, and things that make the owner happy.



SPORTS

Manga all about a particular sport and a protagonist who plays it. Lots of sports are popular, especially baseball, tennis, soccer, and boxing. Make sure you thoroughly research your chosen sport's rules, kit, match ambient, and so on. But it's not just about sport—spice up your story with a love affair, relations between characters, and a character with quirky habits!

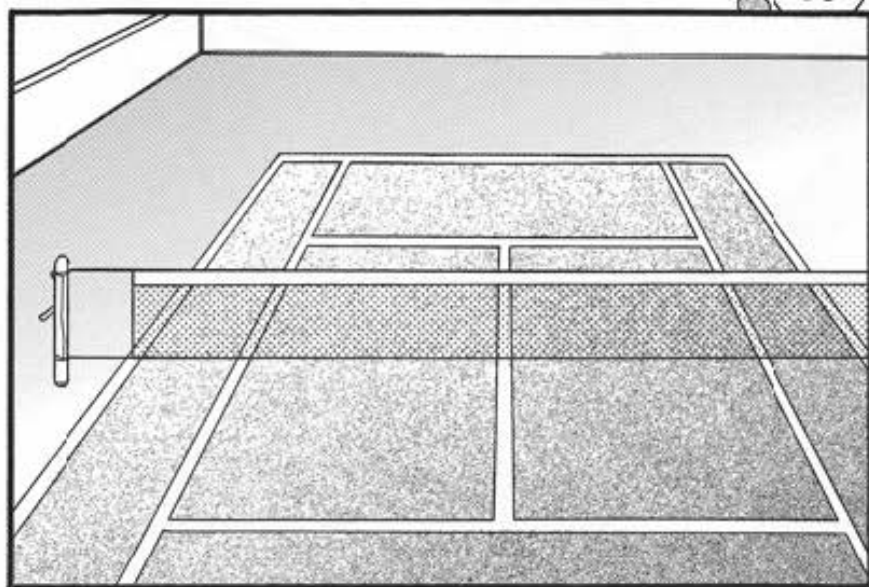


The sport's environment

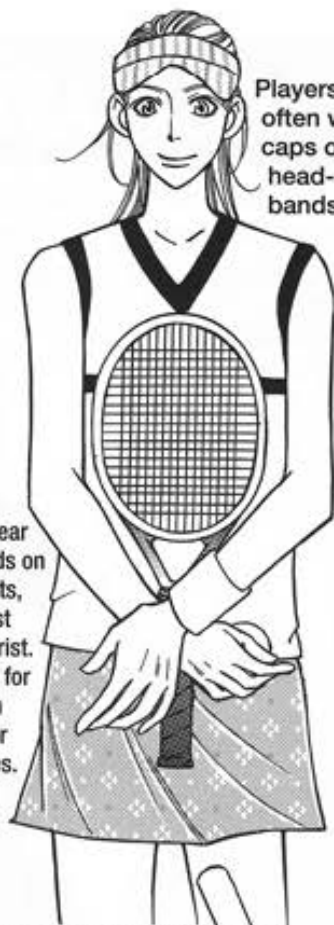
Research the location—is it a court, ground, pitch, or stadium? Also make sure you can draw all the equipment, and pay careful attention to the design of the players' kit and accessories.

If the manga is about tennis, it'll look weird if the players wear baseball kit!

Players often wear caps or headbands.



Some people wear wristbands on both wrists, others just on one wrist. Get ideas for kit design from TV or magazines.



The protagonist and surroundings

Remember that the story shouldn't just contain sports scenes—you can add variety with the ups and downs of your protagonist's love life and goings-on between the characters.



Watch videos of the sport and sketch the positions and movements of the players.



MARTIAL ARTS AND COMBAT SPORTS

Many manga focus on martial arts such as kendo, judo, aikido, and karate, as well as on boxing and street fighting. Martial arts and boxing are sports, while street fighting is popular in video games.



The dojo

Dojos are different according to the type of martial art practiced there. Kendo is usually on wooden floorboards, while judo is on tatami mats. Note that there are also sometimes demarcation lines in matches, especially in judo.

A boxing gym.



Some martial arts like kendo use swords, but note that they use either wooden or bamboo swords in practice.



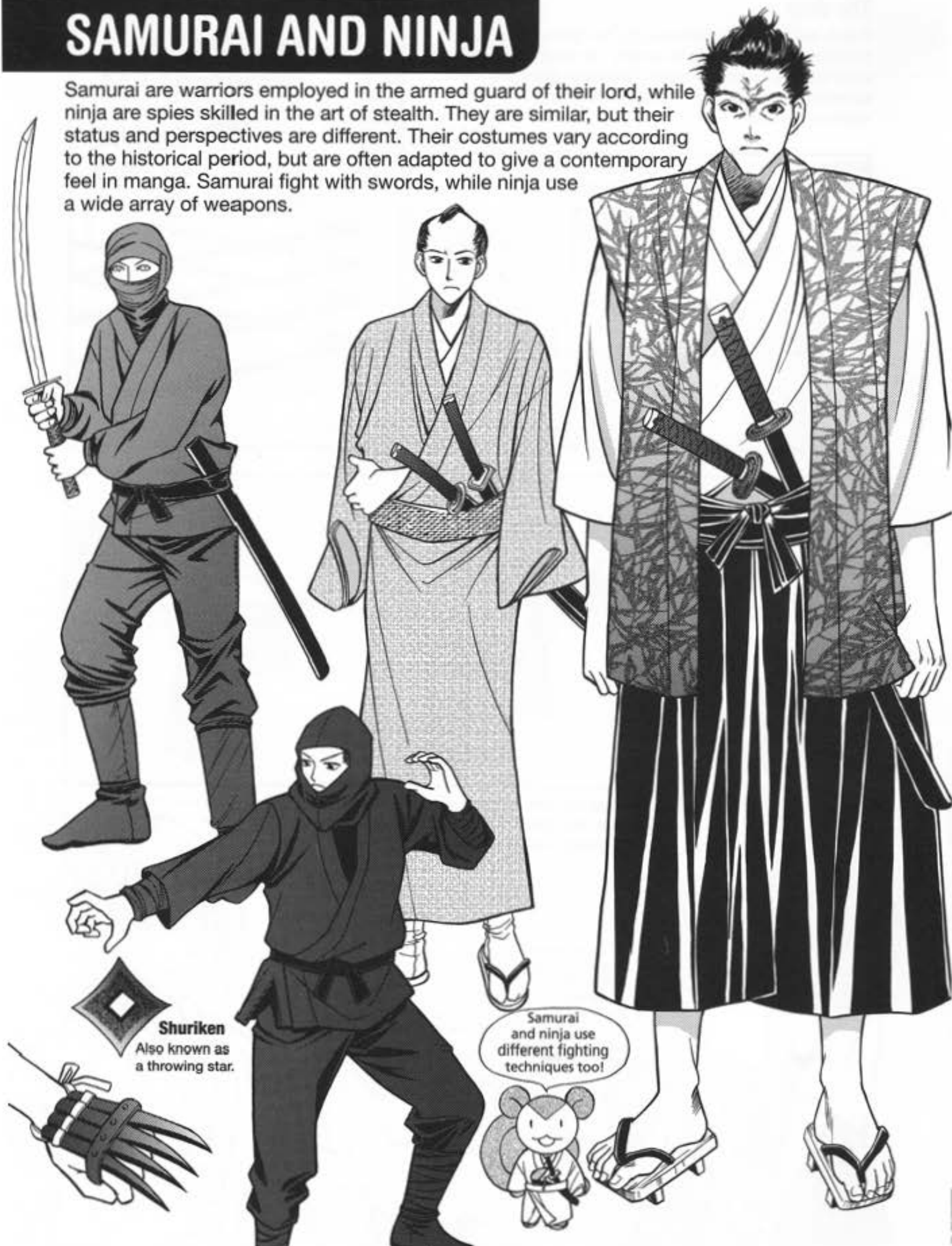
So how are karate and judo kits different?
I guess it's the length of the trousers and the thickness of the fabric...



Girls wear T-shirts under their kit.

SAMURAI AND NINJA

Samurai are warriors employed in the armed guard of their lord, while ninja are spies skilled in the art of stealth. They are similar, but their status and perspectives are different. Their costumes vary according to the historical period, but are often adapted to give a contemporary feel in manga. Samurai fight with swords, while ninja use a wide array of weapons.

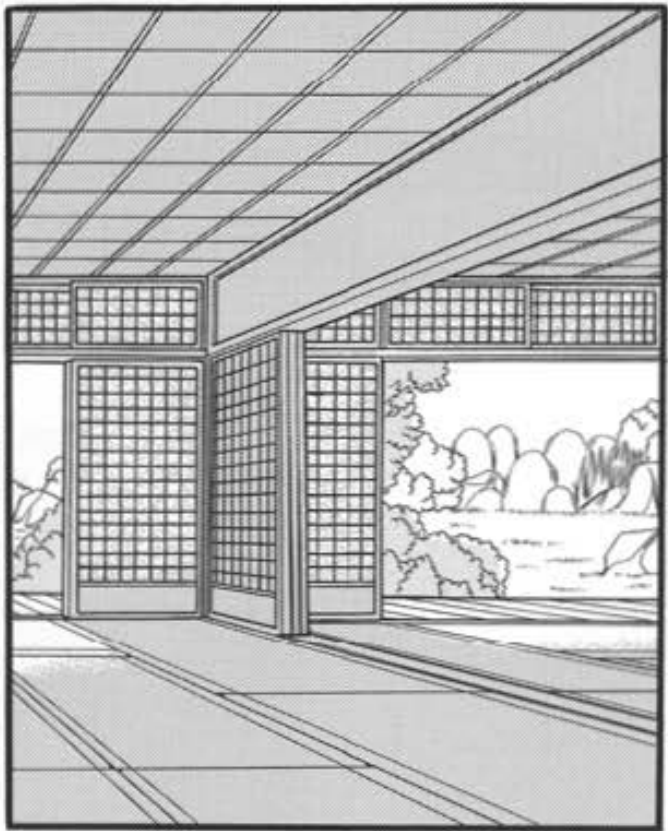


Shuriken

Also known as
a throwing star.

The samurai's residence

A samurai's residence reflects his rank. He could live in a magnificent mansion, like the one shown here, or a simple cottage. A high-ranking samurai would have a lot of bodyguards and servants living together with himself and his family.



Women

Hairstyles vary according to the era. Clothing tended to be looser in earlier periods and rather tighter in later periods.



Spear

A blade attached to a long wooden handle, longer than a sword. Various types of blade were used.

Sword

Japanese swords have a single cutting edge, and are gently curved.

Armor

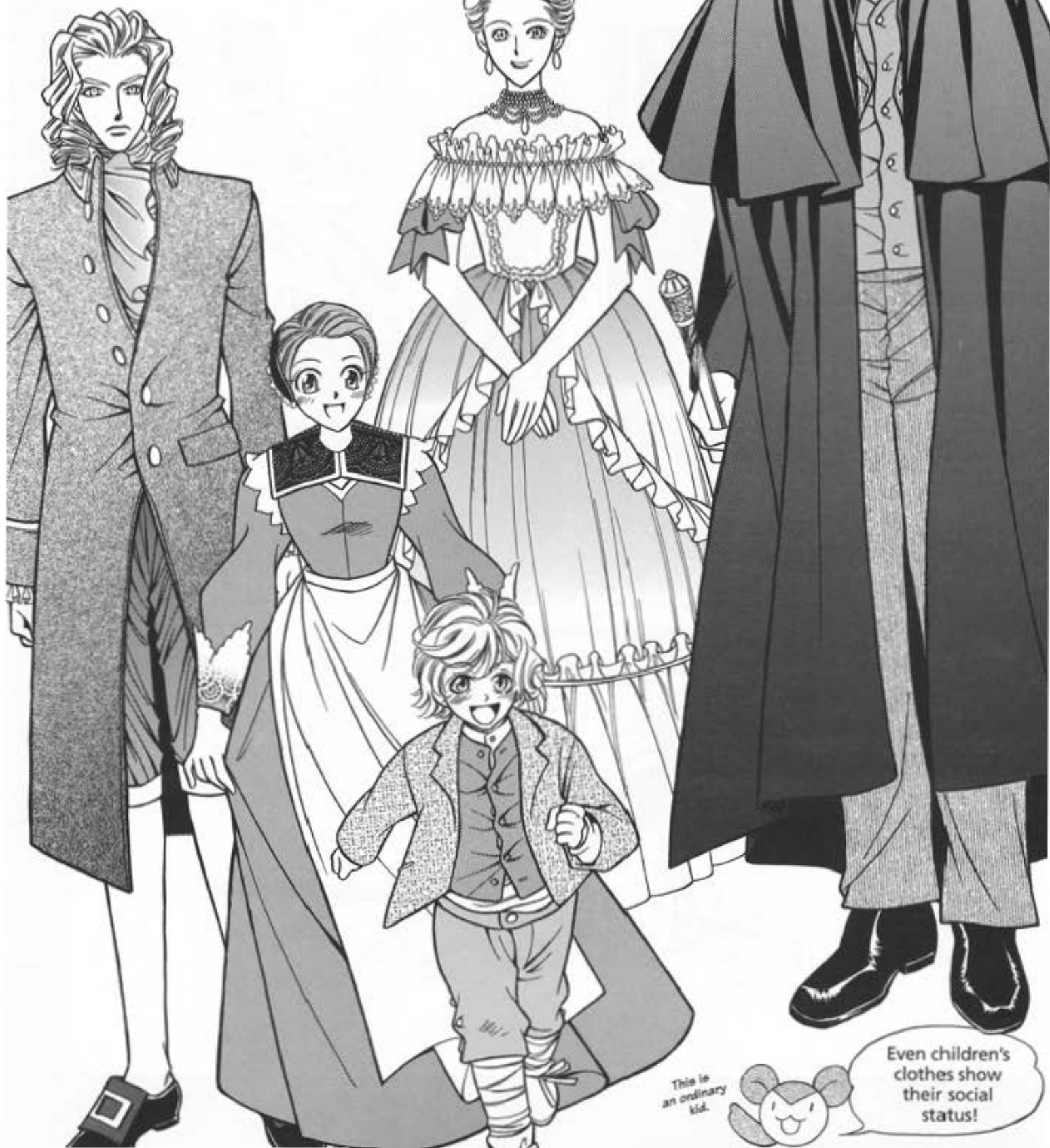
High-ranking samurai used to wear magnificent helmets like this. Low-ranking samurai used to go into battle with little body armor, though.



There were different fashions in armor, too!

HISTORICAL

Manga based on some well-known historical incident, mystery, or revolution. Sometimes occult horror and fantasy manga are set against a historical background, too. The characters' costumes are an important element, as they show the period they lived in as well as their status.



This is
an ordinary
kid.



Even children's
clothes show
their social
status!

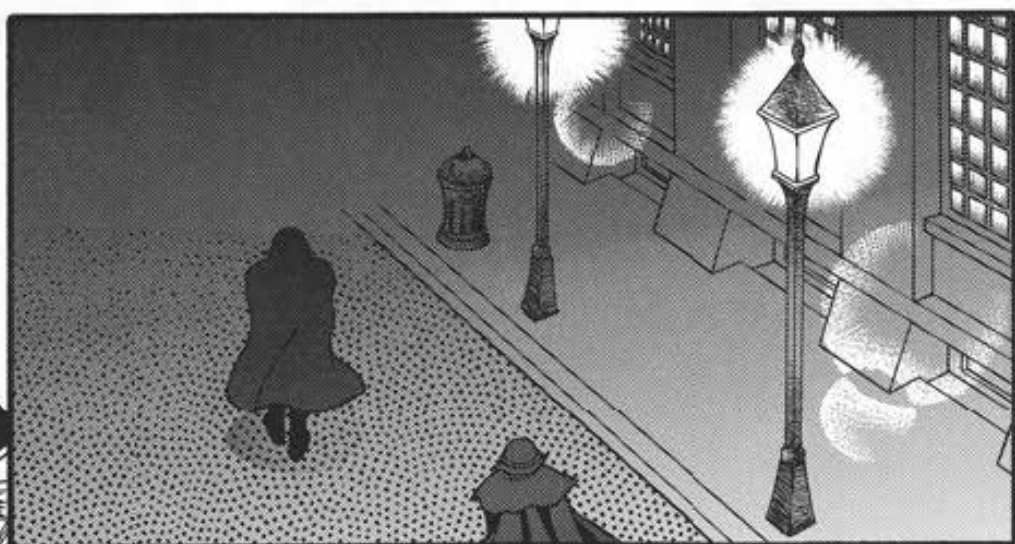
Setting

Building design varies between countries and historical periods. Also, people's homes, possessions, and clothing depend on their position in society. Think carefully about details such as your characters' social status, and where and when they lived.



Special effects

A dark street dimly lit by street lamps, created by skillful use of gradation, screen tone, and inking in.



FANTASY

Manga in which the characters often use magical powers in the course of an adventure, typically a quest. Many stories are influenced by mythology and legend. Take particular care

over the design of your characters' costumes and accessories, such as swords and shields, mantles, and pendants.

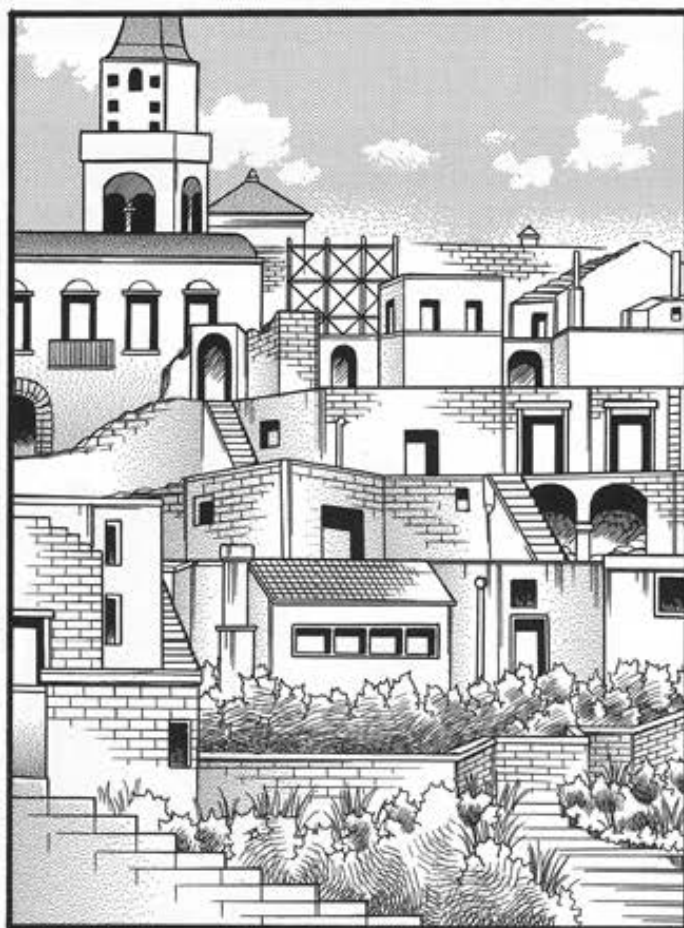
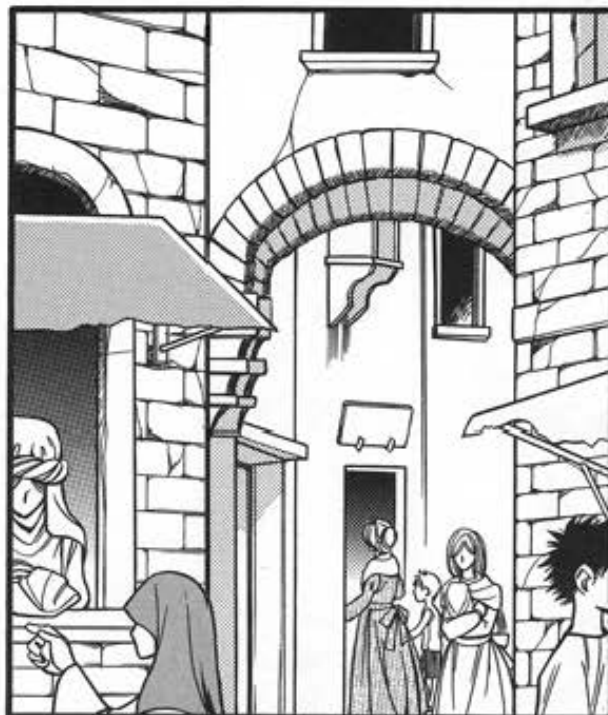


Make sure the characters and their appearance are in keeping with their roles.

Almost all fantasy adventures feature an old man!

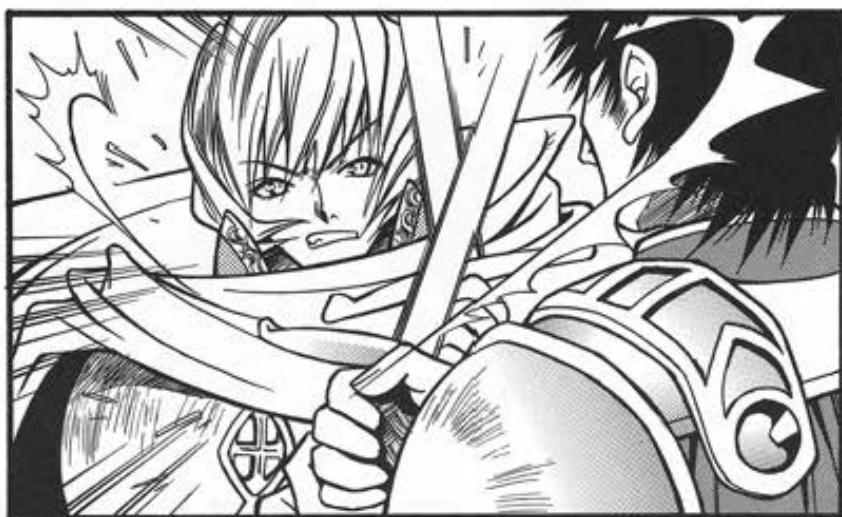
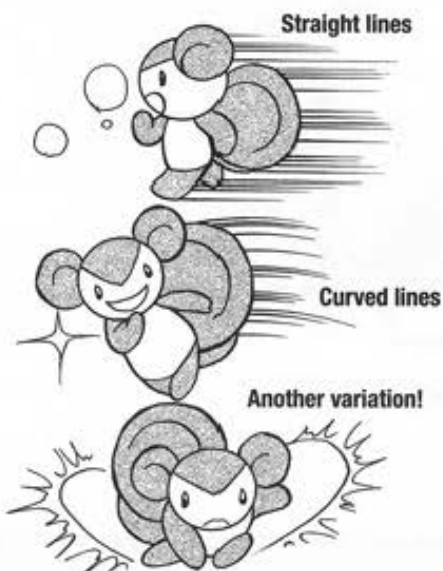
The setting

The story is set in an imaginary world, so draw the background according to how you imagine it.



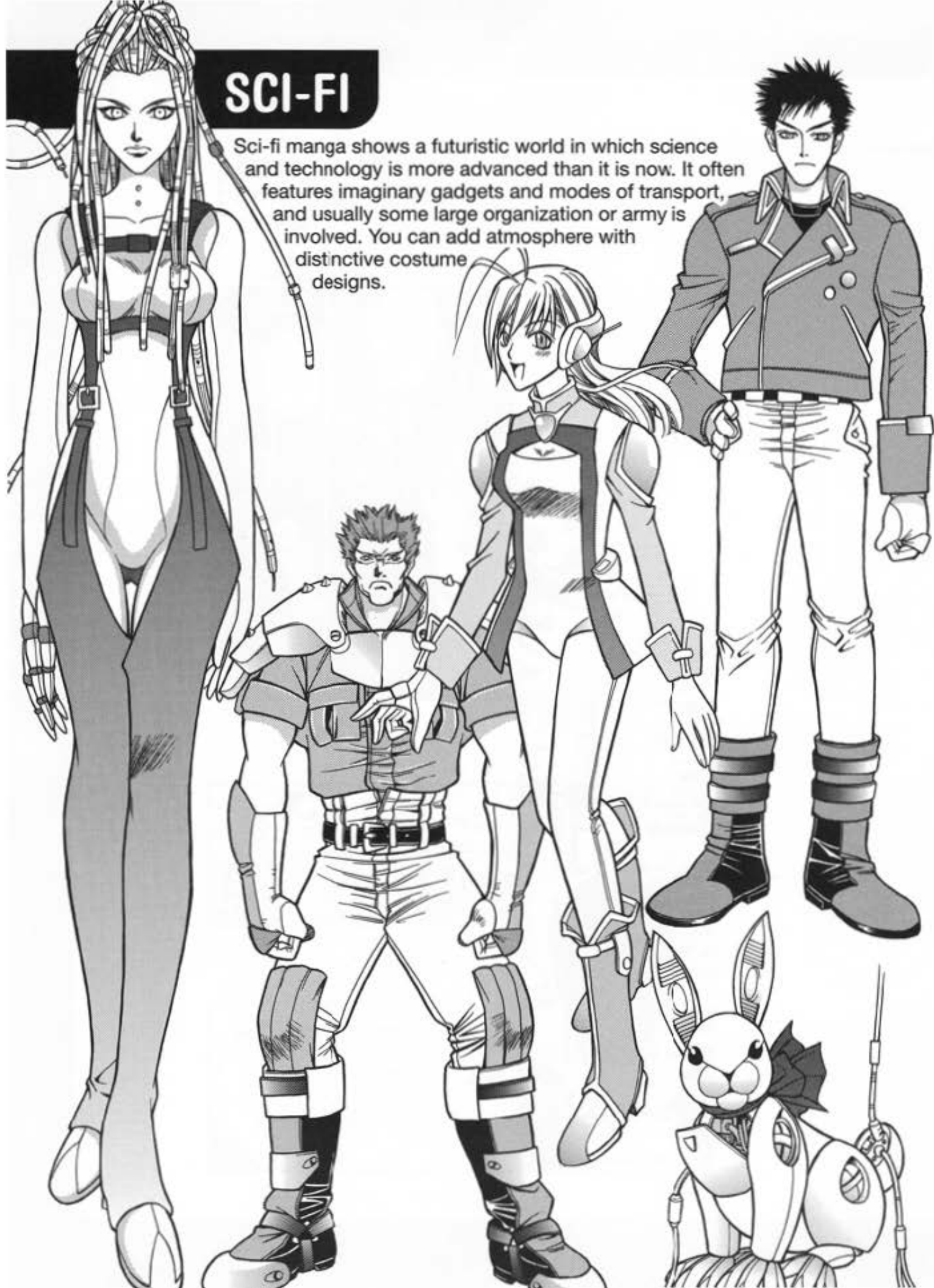
Effects

Use screen tone or speed lines to express magic spells or the movements of a sword. You can add depth by layering screen tone or using white ink splashes. Speed lines are used to depict movement. Use them for arms, legs, or the whole body—even the atmosphere of the surroundings. Think carefully about what type of lines to use to get the effect you want.



SCI-FI

Sci-fi manga shows a futuristic world in which science and technology is more advanced than it is now. It often features imaginary gadgets and modes of transport, and usually some large organization or army is involved. You can add atmosphere with distinctive costume designs.

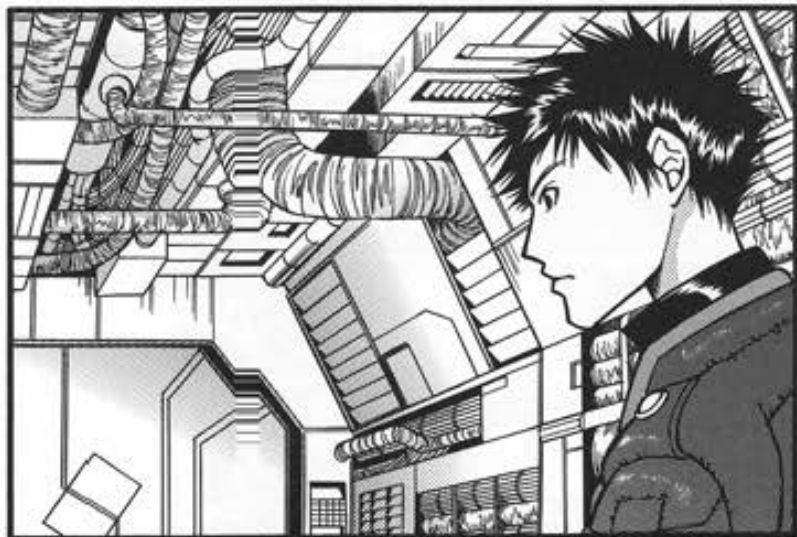
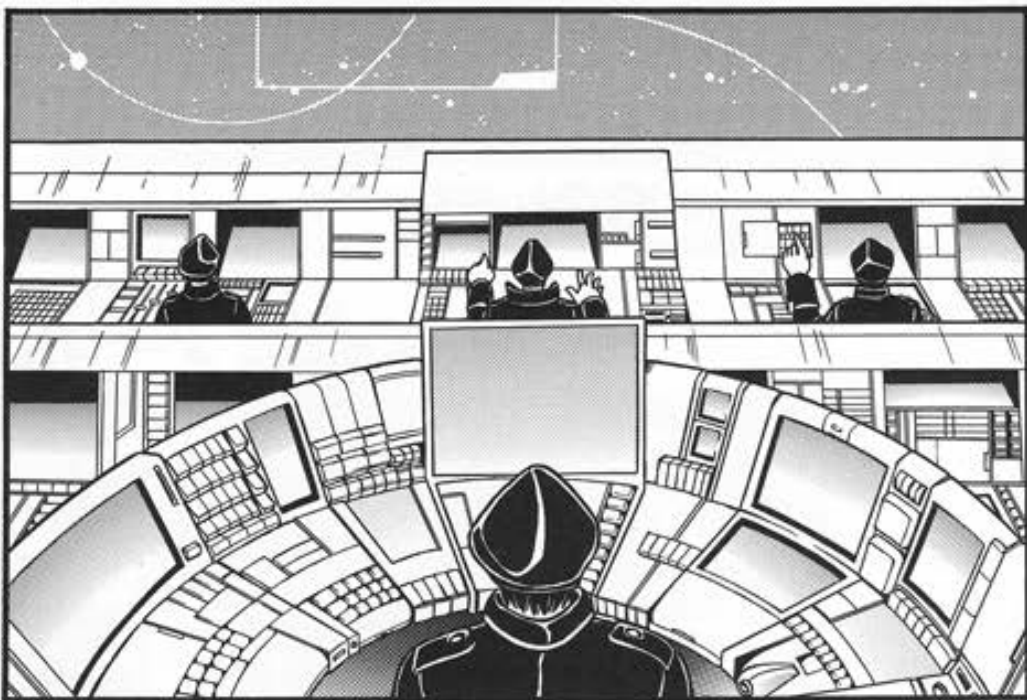


The setting

You can make the setting completely different from the present, just a little in the future, or even similar to the present but with futuristic science and technology. The setting is the key to making your story interesting!

Special effects

Imagine what the future will be like, and then try drawing your ideas.

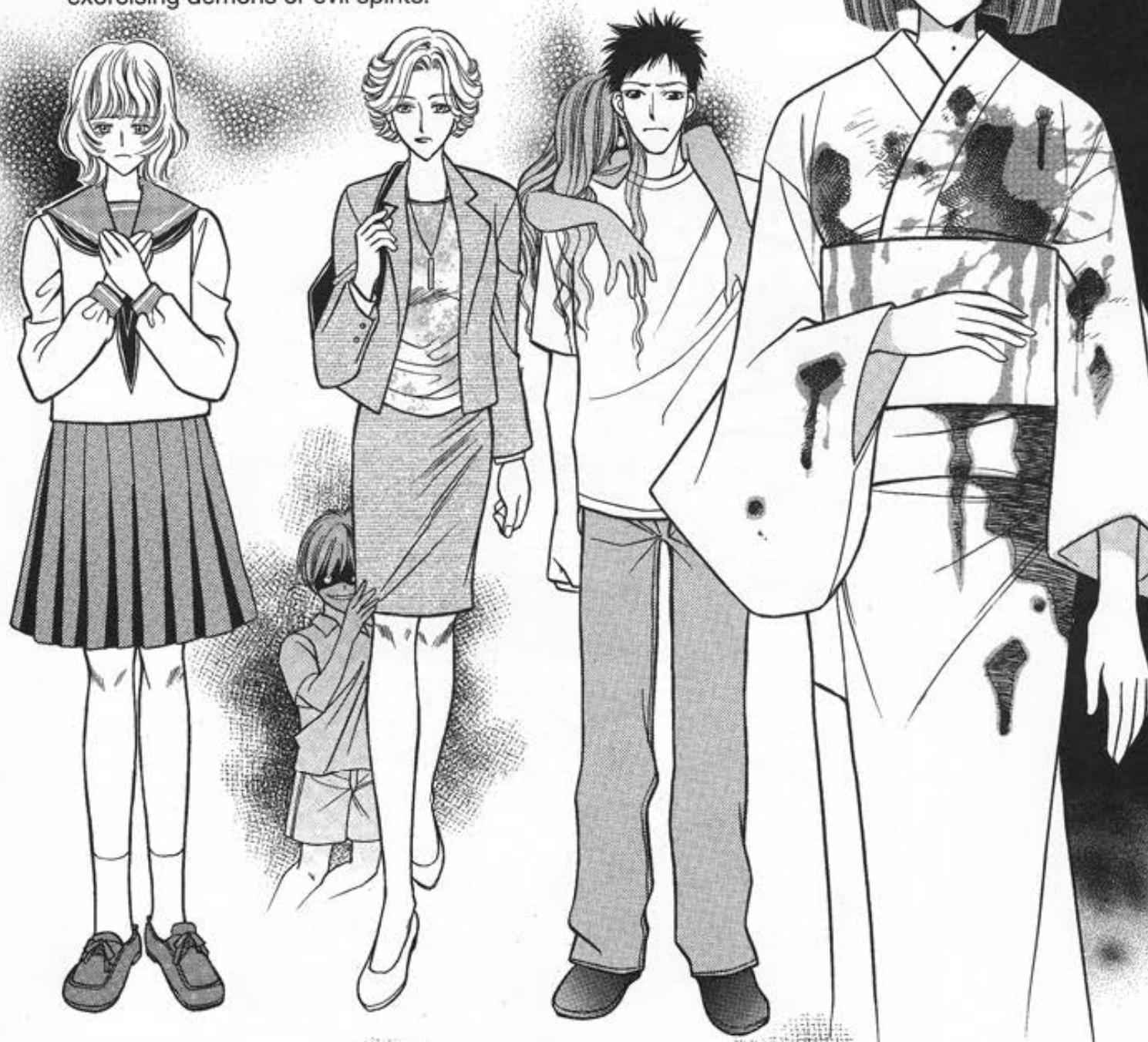


Sci-fi,
fantasy, and
horror often
tend to
overlap.



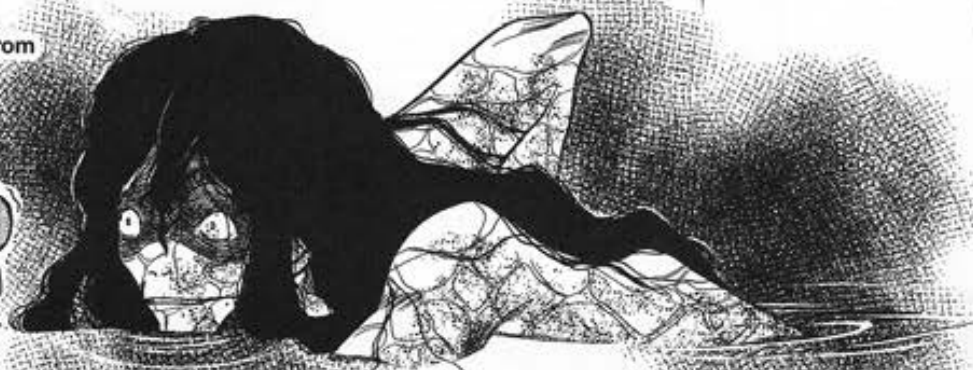
HORROR

Manga that centers on beings not of our world, such as scary stories about the ghost of someone who died an untimely, possibly violent, death. Some also focus on magic or sorcery, or on exorcising demons or evil spirits.



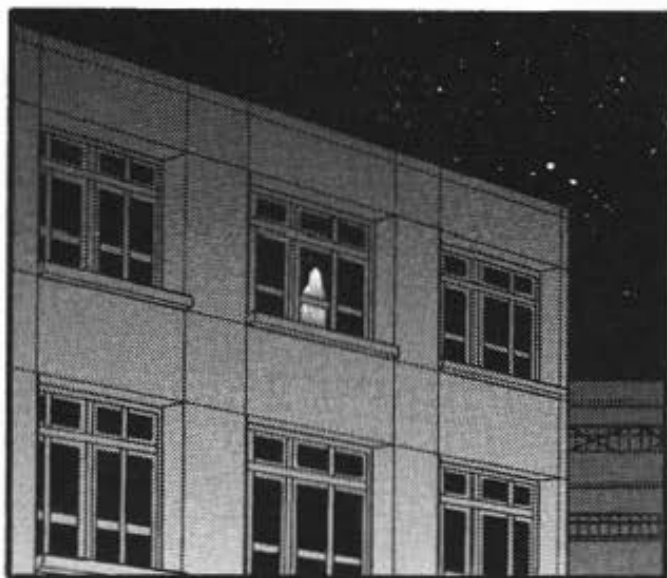
Ghosts don't have a body as such, so they often emerge from the floor or walls. They don't always have a human appearance.

You can enhance the scary effect by adding finishing touches in ink.



Typical locations

Ghosts often appear in schools, houses, or other buildings, or at crime scenes. Think about why the ghost exists, and then decide on the location where it typically appears.



Special effects

When the ghost is bad, the atmosphere tends to be dark and gloomy, so use plenty of black ink and screen tone.



LESSON 2

COMMON SITUATIONS AND ACTIONS

Standard Techniques



ARRIVING

When a character arrives on the scene, it can be a critical moment. Think about their appearance and thoughts at the moment they make their entrance.

A lively entrance



Use the whole body for effect



Bursting in

Some might come in quietly or even sneak in, though.

Think about the situation and the character's personality.



LEAVING

It's not always necessary to include a scene where a character makes an exit, but it's a useful technique when you want them to leave an impression.

Leaving front of frame



Looking back

It can leave a really strong impression when someone looks back over their shoulder and says something as they leave!



Running away



RUNNING

You can create a sense of speed using converging lines and speed lines, and enhance the drama of climactic scenes with full-body figures.



From above



Feet



Upper body



Legs spinning



WALKING

You can use full body, feet, upper body, and background to great effect in walking scenes.

Feet



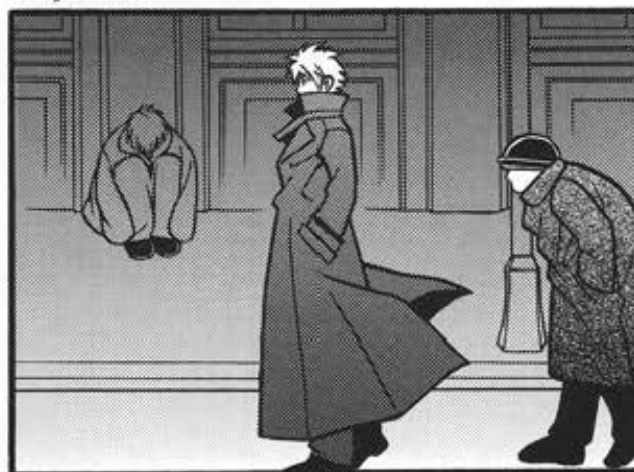
Upper body



From above



In profile



CHASING

Pay attention to the expression of the character running away or the person chasing them, and be beware of getting speed lines or converging lines mixed up.



Chasing someone in a crowd



Reaching after someone



JUMPING

Mid-air action can add vitality to a scene. Use speed lines and converging lines to enhance the sense of motion.

Leaping from a high place



Skipping



Jumping up to a high place



FALLING

Curved converging lines are useful for showing someone falling over.



Being pushed



Falling

Screen tone can really enhance the effect too.



STAIRCASES

The angle you draw your characters from can really enhance the scene.

From the side



From above

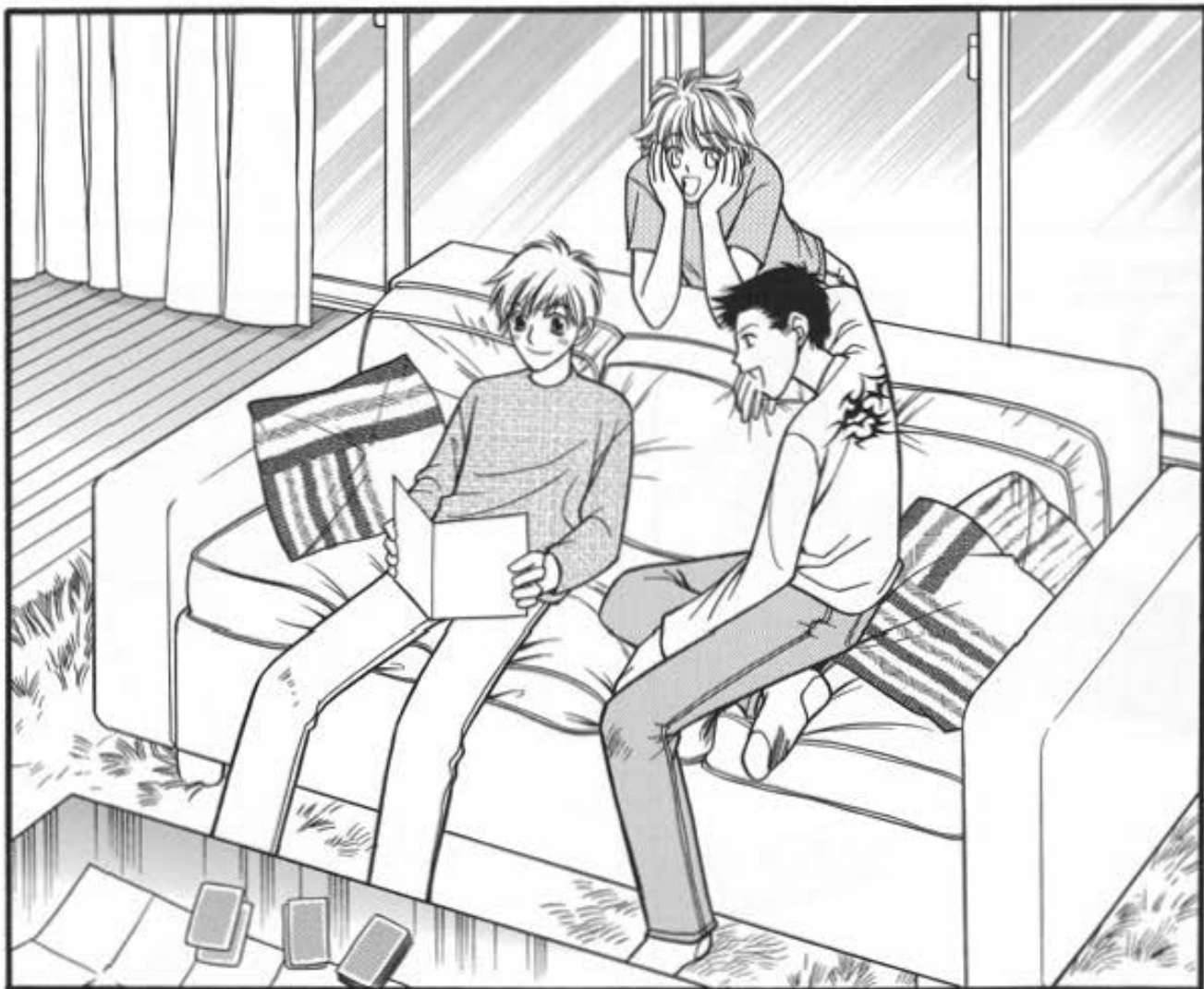


Sitting



SITTING

Wherever your characters are sitting, make sure their seated posture is natural.



At school



In the office



On a chair



Cross-legged



In an armchair



SLEEPING

In bed, taking a nap, or just loafing around... take care over creases in sheets and depressions in pillows.

Lying down



Lap pillow



In bed



EMBRACING

When your characters embrace, remember one is usually taller than the other, or larger. There is a subtle difference in atmosphere between lovers, family members, or friends hugging each other. //

Family



You don't need much background detail in this kind of scene.



Friends



A first embrace...



SAD

Sadness includes anxiety, loneliness, and despair. Take care to ensure that your character's expression blends with the atmosphere of their surroundings.

Crying



Dejected

How could they say that?



Lonesome



Anxious



Friendless



Despairing



LAUGHING

There are various ways of laughing and smiling.

Roaring with laughter

There are lots of different ways of laughing!



Smiling

Good-humored smile



Angry laugh



Tearful laugh



Various expressions



ANGRY

Characters who are really angry have different expressions and gestures from those who are just a bit sulky.

Sulky



Furious



Fed up



Annoyed



Angry



HOSTILE

You can express a character's hatred of someone by showing their inner emotions and using background effects. A fierce glare also enhances the effect of anger.

Dislike



Malice



Enmity



FIGHTING

There are many types of fights, from simple arguments to fist fights to martial arts and other combat sports. Sound effects and other background details can add power to the scene.

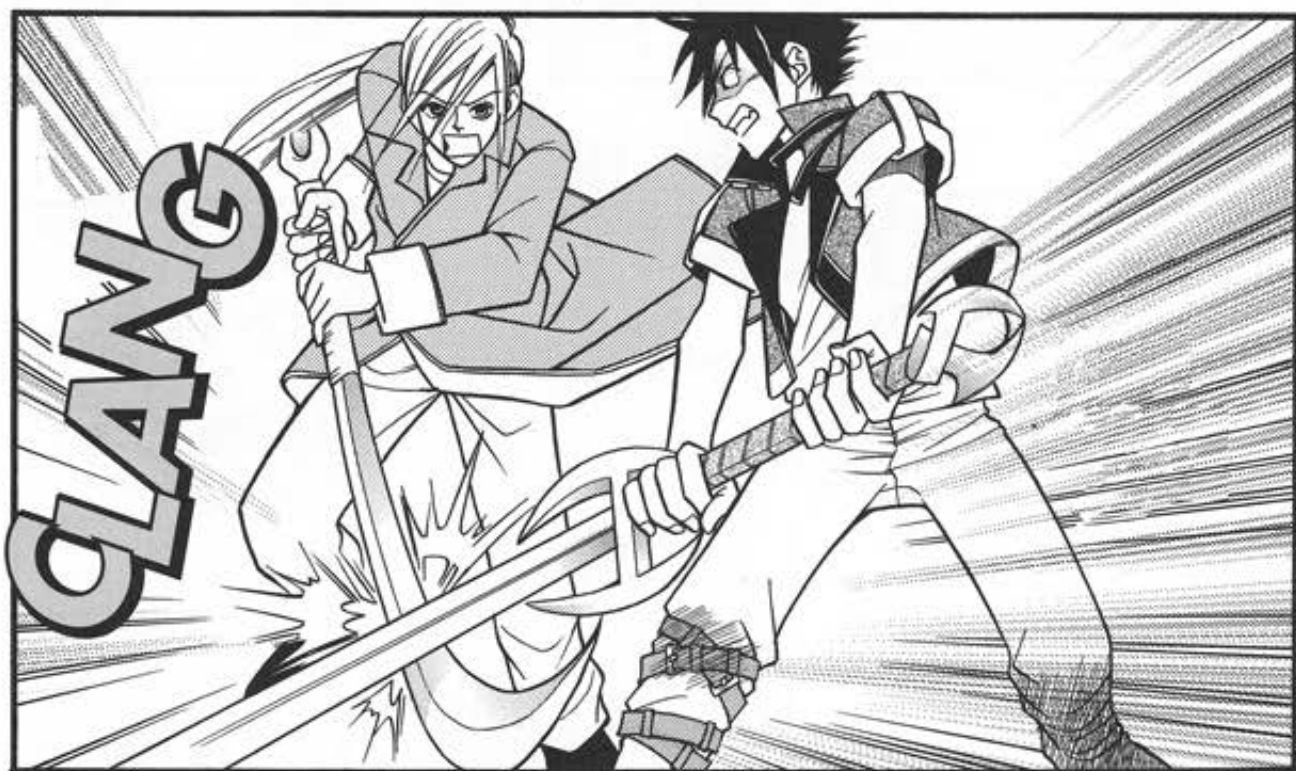
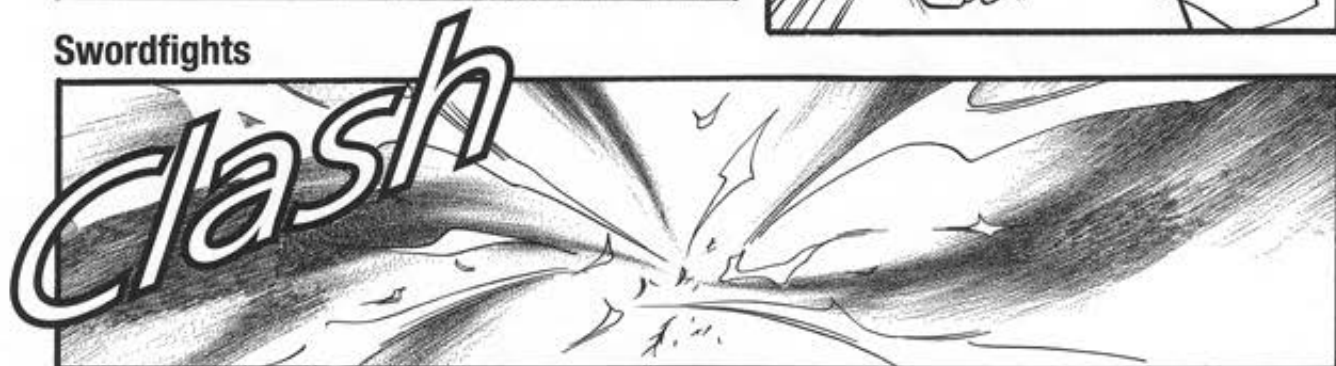
Eye contact

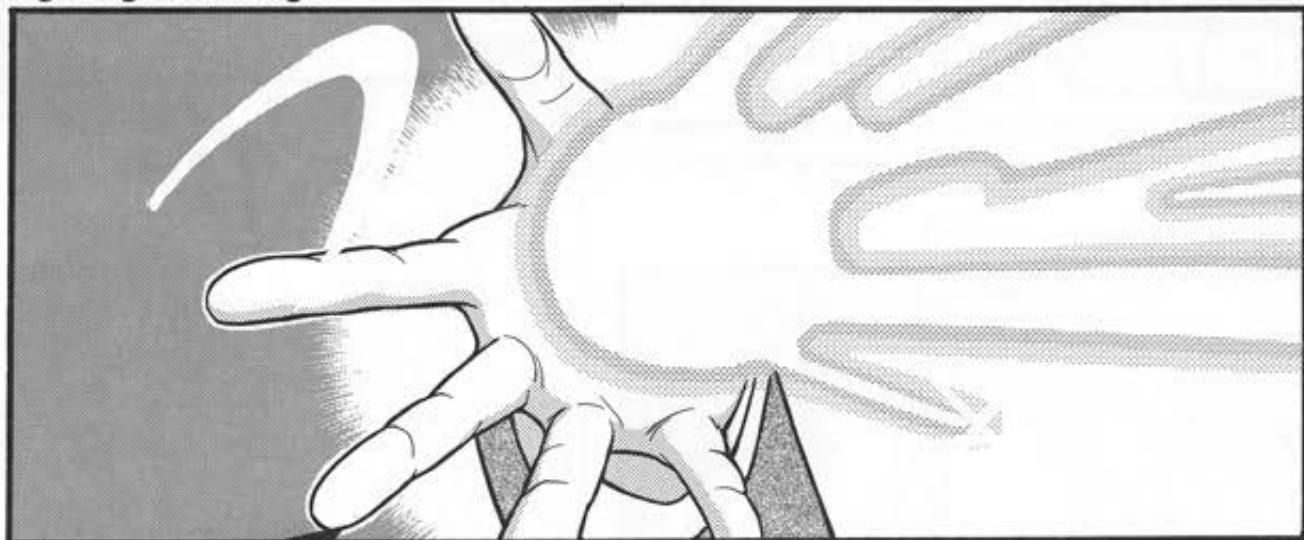


Quarrels



Swordfights





Fist fights



CONFRONTATIONAL

Close-ups are often used for scenes where the protagonist is up against an opponent, human or otherwise.

Show them making eye contact!



Close-up



Arguing back-to-back

